

CHANDAMAMA

MAY 1993

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Turn to Page 19
for "The Flower
With A Curse"



Ishq
mera
mazhab hai.
Rasna Mera Drink
Hai.



Yesterday at my school drama, I was
like Amitabh Bachchan as in 'Khuda Gawah'.
And everyone clapped and applauded.
And when I came home you know what
Mummy asked? 'So little Ustaad, what
do you want to drink?' You know what
I said? 'Ishq mera mazhab hai,
Rasna Mera Drink Hai.' And then
I drank up the whole jug of
pyaara Rasna...



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CHANDAMAMA

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**And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!**

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 23 JUNE 1993 No. 12

THE FLOWER WITH A CURSE : Ever since the blooming of "Shatabdika" is revealed, news of calamity that has struck the southern parts of Maninagar has been pouring in. Villagers have run away to different parts of the kingdom. Those reaching the capital are put up in temple courtyards and other public places. At the instance of Princess Priyamvada, portions of the palace are thrown open to accommodate the women and children. King Pratapavarma and Commander Gambhir Singh are perturbed when word is taken to them that the soldiers sent to guard the villages have vanished into thin air! Who is this devil from nowhere?

VEER HANUMAN : Chandrasena is impatient. Mahiravana has been killed; Patala has a new ruler in Matsya Vallabha. Now Rama would be coming to her any time. She knows Hanuman will keep his word. She gets ready to receive Rama. He tells her who he is and how he cannot take a second wife. But she is not disappointed; she becomes one with her lord.

PLUS something on the lighter side and all your favourites, including PANCHATANTRA.

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Controlling Editor :
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A Century of Peace

Millions of school children in France, one day a few months ago, carried in their bags not only the books they needed in their classrooms but some measure of rice as well. The day's collection came to 4,300 tonnes. The rice and the cash donations they made were for the starving children of Somalia.

As we all know, tragedy struck that African nation more than a year ago when the guerrillas belonging to fourteen different factions in the country started a full-scale war. Not only were thousands of people killed, but several more lost their homes and hearth and had to flee the country to nearby Ethiopia. Those who remained faced starvation and slow death.

Nations of the world came forward to send succour to the starving millions. While the United Nations initiated peace talks among the warring groups, the UN Children's Fund proceeded to collect 10,000 tonnes of rice, for the Somalian children.

The children of France responded—spontaneously. "It is a marvellous gesture of civic education," commended the Humanitarian Action Minister, Bernard Kouchner. "It helps children learn to act as well as talk, and to share collective responsibility."

Ever so many opportunities crop up in our own country—frequently, too—when children in India can emulate their French counterparts. The question is, are they given 'civic education' in their schools, or even by their parents? Do they spontaneously go to the help of their less fortunate brothers and sisters?

Children in India are having their summer vacation, and we hope these thoughts would inspire them to "act and talk" for the relief and happiness of those who deserve a soft corner in their hearts.

President for the Sixth Term



To be elected for the sixth consecutive term to lead one's country will be no mean achievement for any politician. President Suharto of Indonesia was given this honour and privilege last March. The 72-year-old one-time General was chosen by the 1,000-member People's Consultative Assembly, when it met in capital Jakarta for its 10-day-long session. It was a unanimous choice, because his was the only nomination that had come up for consideration by the Assembly. His renomination for a sixth term was not unexpected, too.

Indonesia earned a place in world history when Portuguese traders went and settled in some of its 13,000 odd islands in the 16th century. What had attracted them to that area was its spices. They were soon driven out of the place by the English who, in turn, were ejected by the Dutch in 1595. For the next 200 years, the archipelago (meaning: a group of islands) was ruled by the Dutch East India company. In 1798, it became a colony of The Netherlands. During World War II (1939-45), Japan occupied it in 1942 and established a nationalist government under its suzerainty. However, when the Japanese surrendered to the Allies in 1945, the nationalists under Mr. Sukarno declared independence. The formal transfer from Dutch sovereignty took place in 1949. The Netherlands also ceded Western New Guinea in 1963. In 1966, there was an attempted Communist coup against Mr. Sukarno. General Raden Suharto crushed the coup and established emergency administration. In 1967, he replaced Mr. Sukarno as acting President. He was confirmed in that post in 1968 and was re-elected in 1973, 1978, 1983, and for a fifth term in 1988.

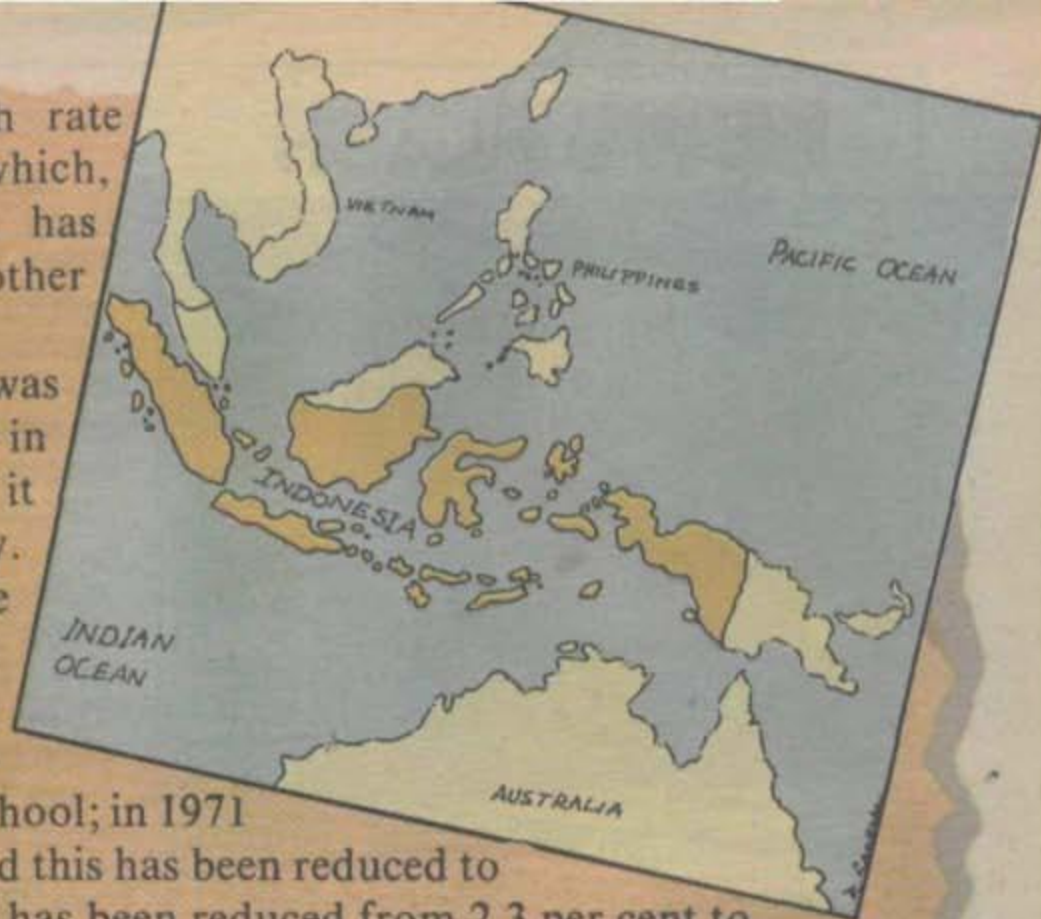
President Suharto is known more as a quiet "doer" than a "talker", and that speaks for his success. Indonesia's economic and political programmes of the last 25 years have earned for him praise inside the country as well as abroad. His 5-year-plans, with a 25-year perspective, have caught the attention of several nations of the world. The country's economy has

enjoyed an annual growth rate averaging six per cent which, President Suharto claims, has been achieved by only another ten countries in the world.

Indonesia, at one time, was the largest importer of rice in the world; but in 1984, it attained self-sufficiency. Infant mortality has come down, from 140 to 60 per 1,000 births, in about 20 years. All children of primary school age now attend school; in 1971

illiteracy was 39 per cent, and this has been reduced to 16; population growth, too, has been reduced from 2.3 per cent to 1.6 per cent. He thus richly deserves the frequent reference to him as the "Father of Development" in Indonesia. He has already chalked out his plans for the country for another 25 years and calls the coming ten years as the "Take-off Era".

One point the people of Indonesia are already debating on is: Will President Suharto complete his sixth term and offer himself for a record seventh term, or has he already started searching for a successor?



MORE ABOUT INDONESIA

- The 13,500 islands in Indonesia stretch out to 5,150 km, with some of them lying in the Indian Ocean, and the others in the Pacific Ocean.
- Indonesia is the world's 16th largest (1,919,440 sq.km.) nation in the world; the fifth most populous (169 million) as well.
- Also the 11th most powerful (defence forces) country, next to Canada.
- It has the fifth fastest growth rate in the world.
- It is the world's third largest rice-grower.
- Bahasa Indonesia (written in English script) is the official language; there are nearly 200 regional languages and dialects.
- Indonesian currency is called 'rupiah'

NEWS FLASH

Water in Venus

"Water, water everywhere, but not a drop....", sang the space probe Pioneer 12, but before it completed the refrain, modified it into "...even in Venus." The thousands of data sent by the satellite before it disintegrated in space last October have provided enough evidence of the existence of "large amounts" of water—not now, but three billion years ago—sufficient "to fill oceans 8 to 25 metres deep", according to the scientists at the NASA Ames Research Centre. They have also come to the conclusion that the presence of water would have led to the development of some form of life—at that point of time.

TV on spectacles

A TV set in the drawing room is common; a portable TV working on batteries that one can carry to the picnic spot is not very uncommon; tiny TV receivers fixed on to the dashboard in motor cars are becoming popular. Now comes a mini TV set fixed to the spectacle frame! The images can be seen with the help of mirrors adjusted to the lenses. The mirrors shut out the surrounding areas, so that one can have an unhampered view. The TV glasses have been designed by two Hungarian engineers.

Instant photograph

A Press photographer covering an event far away from the office of his newspaper need no longer waste time in developing his roll and transmitting a copy to the office. He can, with the help of an electronic device placed behind the camera, now send pictures from any remote corner of the world—provided he also carries a radio telephone that has access to a

satellite. The device stores the picture in memory and despatches this to a central computer via a satellite. The computer, in turn, retrieves the picture, gives it a caption, and transmits it to its destination—all within a matter of a few seconds.



No "Sir", only "plain"

It is said of Michael Faraday (1791-1867), the English chemist and physicist, that we owe electricity to him. He made the first dynamo, a simple instrument consisting of a powerful magnet and an armature of a coil which, when rotated between the two poles of the magnet, produced electric current in the coil.

Faraday came of poor circumstances, especially after his father, a blacksmith, died when he was only 19. At that time, he was working as a bookbinder. He had a kindhearted employer, who encouraged him to read books. When he noticed the youth's interest in science, he also sent him to attend lectures at the Royal Institution. In 1812, Faraday attended a lecture by Sir Humphry Davy a chemist who was later to become famous for his safety lamp for the use of miners.

On his return from the lecture, Faraday wrote an appreciative letter to Sir Humphry, who offered him a job in his laboratory in the vacancy caused by the dismissal of an assistant. He also took Faraday along whenever he went on tour and associated him in his research work. As Faraday was keen on pursuing his own experiments and research, he stopped accompanying his 'master'. Sir

Humphry soon became jealous of Faraday's successes and even tried to prevent his election to the Royal Society, though he did not succeed!

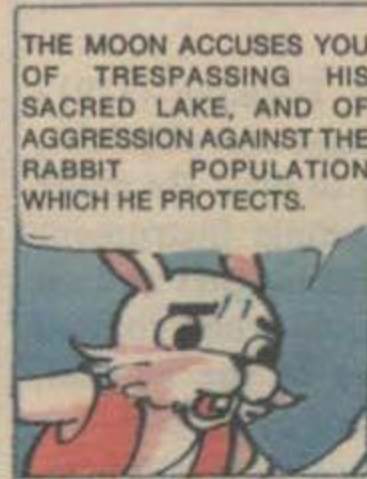
By 1834, Faraday, who was then married, stopped dining out, so as to utilise that time also for research. By 1838, he decided not to entertain any visitors for three days in a week!

However, he was regularly giving lectures at the Royal Institution. He would pre-arrange with his friends in the hall to signal him if he was speaking too fast, or too slow, or too long! The lectures he keenly looked forward to were the ones he delivered for the benefit of young people regularly from 1829. These lectures became so famous that even adults

flocked to listen to him, often standing outside the hall which would be crammed with children.

Prime Minister Peel wanted to sanction a pension for Faraday in his old age; but his move was defeated in the Parliament. His successor, Melbourne, refused to consider the proposal. However, King William IV overruled the Prime Minister and granted a pension. When a knighthood was offered, Faraday refused. "I must remain plain Michael Faraday to the last," he said!





He who speaks truth with all his heart is superior to those who make gifts and practise austerities. (Thirukkural)

THE ELEPHANT KING KNEELS DOWN, DISTURBING THE WATER IN THE LAKE



I CAN'T FIND HIM. WHERE'S HE?

STOP! STOP!! DON'T TOUCH THE WATER!

WHY? WHAT'S WRONG?



O KING! WHY HAVE YOU DONE SO? THE MIGHTY MOON IS ANGRY, SEE HOW A THOUSAND MOONS SURROUND YOU!



WHY IS HE ANGRY WITH ME? I'VE COME ONLY TO SEEK HIS PARDON.



YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TOUCHED THE SACRED WATER AND ROUSED HIS ANGER!



PRAY, BESEECH YOUR KING TO FORGIVE ME. I SWEAR THAT I AND MY FOLLOWERS SHALL NEVER TOUCH THIS LAKE.



WE'LL NEVER TOUCH THIS LAKE. NEVER! NEVER!



AH HAI HA HAI HE'S RUNNING AWAY! AH HAI



THE CROW CONCLUDES THE STORY THUS



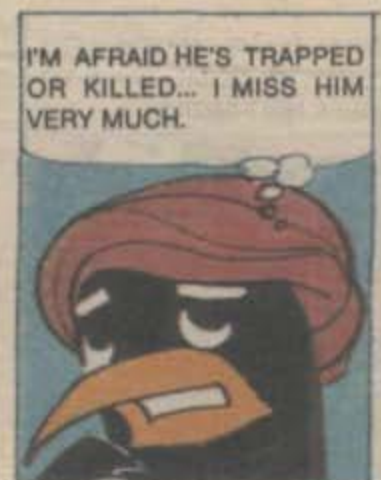
SO, YOU SEE, THE MERE MENTION OF THE NAME OF A KING SHOULD MAKE HIS FOES SHUDDER.



They cannot walk steadfastly and straight, according to rule, who are keen to cheat others.



ONE DAY, HE WENT TO PICK UP GRAINS, BUT DIDN'T RETURN AT NIGHTFALL.



Everybody will worship someone who has attained the control of his own soul.



THE PARTRIDGE SEES THE RABBIT IN HIS ABODE.



YOU THIEF! BY WHAT RIGHT HAVE YOU OCCUPIED MY ABODE?

YOU'RE A FOOL! IT WAS VACANT, SO I OCCUPIED IT.



I CAN PROVE THAT THE ABODE IS MINE. MY NEIGHBOURS WILL TESTIFY.



YOU FOOL! YOU'RE IGNORANT OF TRADITION.



SAGE NARADA SAYS, MEN GAIN THE RIGHT OF POSSESSION BY TEN YEARS' RESIDENCE...



... AND THE BIRDS AND BEASTS BY MERE OCCUPATION.



DON'T TALK OF TRADITION. COME OUT!



THE RABBIT DOES NOT MOVE OUT.



LET'S CONSULT SOMEONE WHO IS WISE. WE SHALL ABIDE BY HIS DECISION.

THE CROW IS LISTENING...



THIS QUARREL IS VERY INTERESTING, INDEED! I WANT TO SEE WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN.

To Continue

As this world is not for those who are devoid of wealth, that world is not for those who are without kindness.

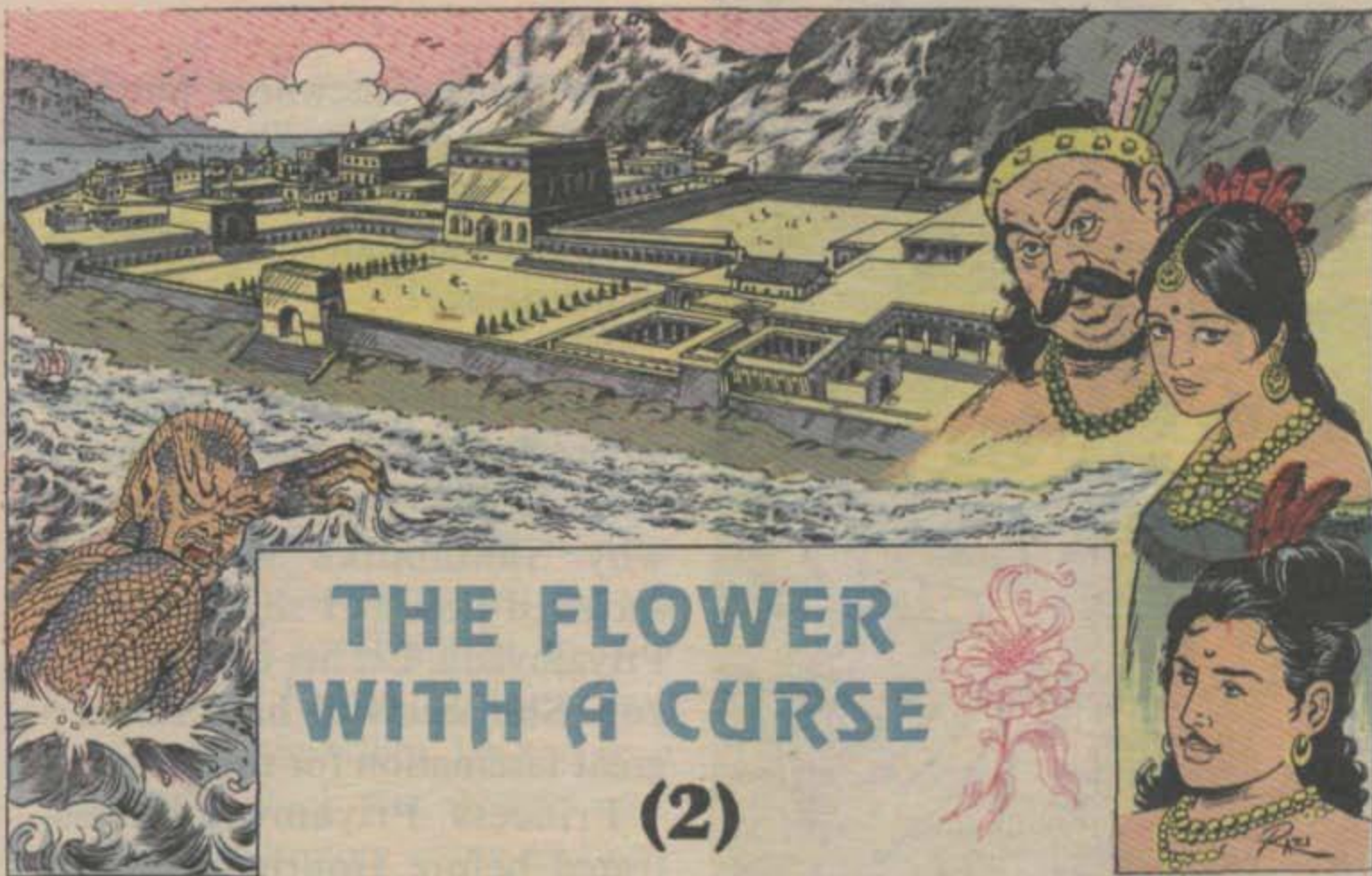


Provoking anger, annoyance

Reader Kirankumar Atom of Imphal was on his way to the office. He had to pass a weaving mill where he saw a commotion at the gates even from a distance. The place was crowded and the people were shouting some slogans. He doubted whether he might have to take another route for the office, when one of the men came forward. It was his friend, one of the mill workers, who told him what was happening: "The boss will *go bananas* when he hears of the strike," he said and hurried back to his colleagues. It was only after he managed to sneak through the crowd that Kirankumar wondered what bananas had to do with the strike. '*To go bananas*' or '*be bananas*' will refer to someone who gets excited, or angry, or simply goes mad!

If reader Jyotiranjana Biswal of Dhenkanal had been waiting for the proprietor of the weaving mill in his cabin, he might have heard him shout as he entered, "Ask them to stop that noise, it's driving me up the wall!" To *send or drive* someone *up the wall* means, to annoy him. Used as he was to the soothing sound of the weaving looms in the factory, the proprietor must have found the slogan-shouting as he entered the mill premises irritating, annoying. Hence his outburst!





(The month-long competitions and contests preceding Holi festivities have just concluded in Maninagar. The team of tribal youth from the northern parts, which has bagged several prizes, becomes the cynosure of all eyes. King Pratapavarma declares that the tribals will be given a place in the army. The team leader, Thangal, presents a bouquet of exotic flowers to Princess Priyamvada, who is keen to grow them in the royal garden. The soldiers sent by Commander Ghambhir Singh return with more flowers and no sapling. 'Shatabdika' has bloomed after nearly a hundred years. Raj Guru, Gourinath, feels that the flower forebodes evil.)

“Evil, did you say, O revered Guru?” asked Raja Pratapavarma of the Raj Guru. “Why should such a beautiful sweet-smelling flower like Shatabdika forebode evil? Somehow I can’t believe it!”

“I shall tell you all that by and by, but how did you get them in the palace?” queried Gourinath.

The king narrated to him all the happenings that preceded the Holi celebrations in the kingdom and how Commander Ghambhir Singh had deputed a captain and a soldier to search out the tribals and take their help in obtaining a sapling. “They seem to have encountered a lot of difficulties in carrying out their task. And they

THE CURSE AND THE CALAMITY



succeeded only partially—in the sense, they located the plant, but there was no sapling, it appears. The tribals call the flower ‘Shatabdika’ as it has bloomed after a hundred years. That’s what they told the captain. He managed to bring some more flowers for the princess.”

“Where has she kept them?” the Raj Guru asked anxiously.

“Why? In her chambers, in a flower vase,” replied the king.

“In her chambers?” Gourinath was evidently horrified. “She should not keep them anywhere inside! If she is so keen, let her

place them somewhere outside. Left to myself, I won’t have them anywhere around. It’ll be bad for the palace and all those who live in the palace!”

“O most revered Guru! We shall certainly abide by your advice,” said Raja Pratapavarma, reassuringly. “But you must tell us why Shatabdika is such an accursed flower. I shall send for Priyamvada. Let her also listen to you. She seems to have taken a great fascination for the flower.”

Princess Priyamvada prostrated before Gourinath. “May you live long, Priyamvada!” the Raj Guru blessed her.

“Why did you send for me, father?” asked the princess.

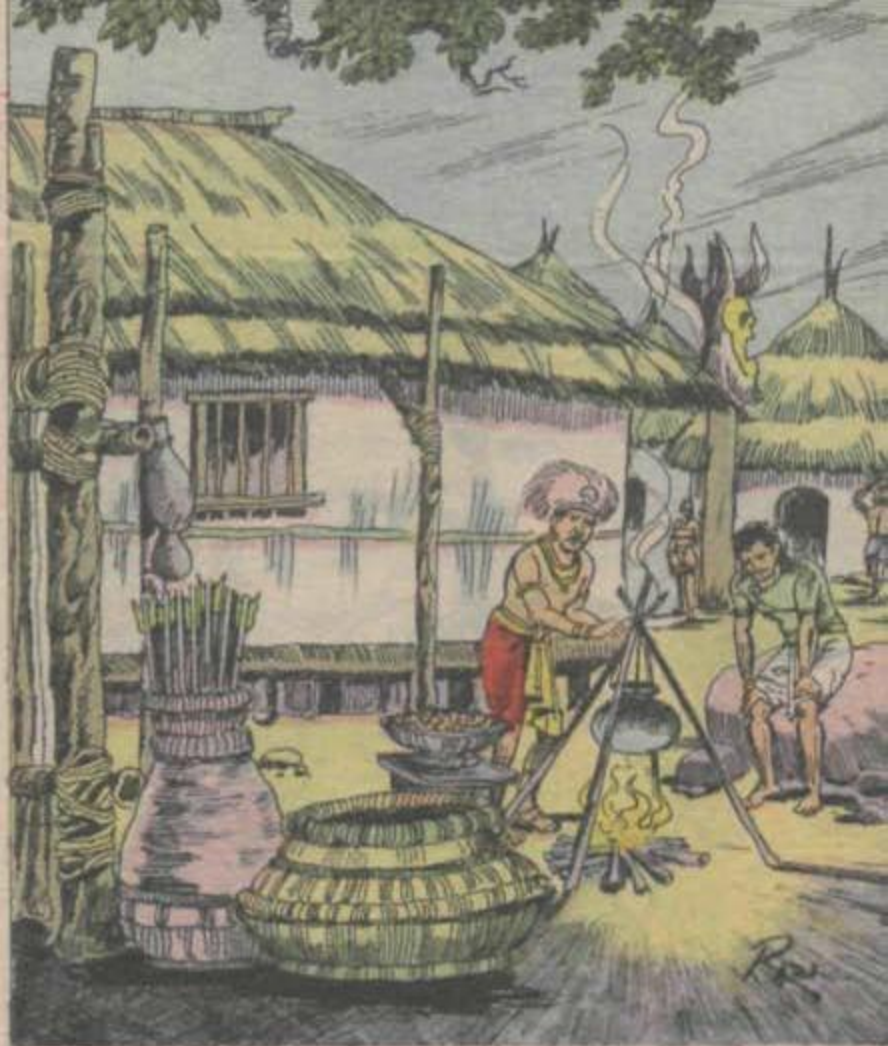
“Our Raj Guru has something grave to tell us about the flower we got from the tribals,” said Raja Pratapavarma mildly.

“You see, this flower Shatabdika was long, long ago blooming every year,” the Raj Guru began, “and the moment it blossomed, its fragrance spread everywhere, as it did not wither away for several days together. Years ago, your grandfather’s grandfather, Chandrakant Varma was the ruler here. He had a brother, Chandramani,



who shed all traces of royalty in him and, instead of helping his elder brother in ruling the country, he became a vagabond. In the course of his wanderings, he reached the northern parts where he came upon this flower. He befriended the tribals living in those parts and was attracted to one of them called Nagambi. This man used to indulge in witchcraft, for which Chandramani took a fancy and learnt quite a few tricks from the tribal. He had seen Nagambi pluck the flowers and put them in boiling water, and boil the same water over and over again and for several days together. Strangely, the thick potion that remained at the end of the exercise retained the same enchanting fragrance. Nagambi had told him, the potion was so powerful that by sprinkling it on anybody, he or she could be easily enticed and made to obey one's commands." The Raj Guru stopped the narration to catch his breath.

The princess who was listening to him intently without missing a single word, interjected at that moment. "Only the potion, O revered Guru not the flower itself?"



"I'm coming to that, my dear child," said Gourinath, feeling relieved that the story had not excited her. "When he returned to Maninagar, Chandramani had brought with him a huge bunch of flowers. He took them to his chambers straight away and, in no time, got busy making the potion! When it was ready, his idea was to try it first on some innocent person and later on his brother, the king himself, with a view to usurping the throne."

"Did he succeed, Guru-ji?" asked Priyamvada curiously. "I hope he didn't harm Raja





Chandrakant!"

"No, Priyamvada, he couldn't!" replied the Raj Guru. "Before that, nemesis took place. Let me explain. At that time, old Kulshreshta was the priest at the Lai-rembi temple. He had a good-looking daughter, called Bhagyasri. Chandramani had on three or four occasions met her, without knowing that she was the priest's only daughter, and taken a fancy for her. He decided he would try the effectiveness of the potion on her. One day he lay in wait for her as she returned from her bath in the river. He thought he would by

some ruse separate her from her friends and then sprinkle the potion on her. He succeeded only till then, for, the moment the potion fell on her, Bhagyasri ran hither and thither, behaving as if she had gone off her mind. Her friends heard her cries of distress as they were proceeding to the temple ahead of her and rushed to her aid. While some of them ran to her, the others accosted Chandramani who, they found, was running away holding a container and a twig of leaves in his hand. Their shouts of help brought several men and women, who then forced him to go with them to the temple. It was the time for *arti* and Kulshreshta was busy adorning the idol. He dropped everything in his hand and rushed out of the temple when he saw his daughter being brought there supported by her friends.

"Bhagyasri! What has happened to you?" he shouted in astonishment, holding her in his hands and shaking her by the shoulders. She babbled out something and it was her friends who replied for her. 'Sire, this man did something to her, and she has been acting like mad since then...'

"The priest did not wait to hear



any more from them. He turned to the young man surrounded by the men and women, who now stepped aside to give way to the priest. 'Who are you? What did you do to my daughter?' Kulshreshta was shaking all over with anger.

"Sire, I didn't know she is your daughter. I merely sprinkled this potion on her to attract her to me. I never expected her to behave like that. Please..."

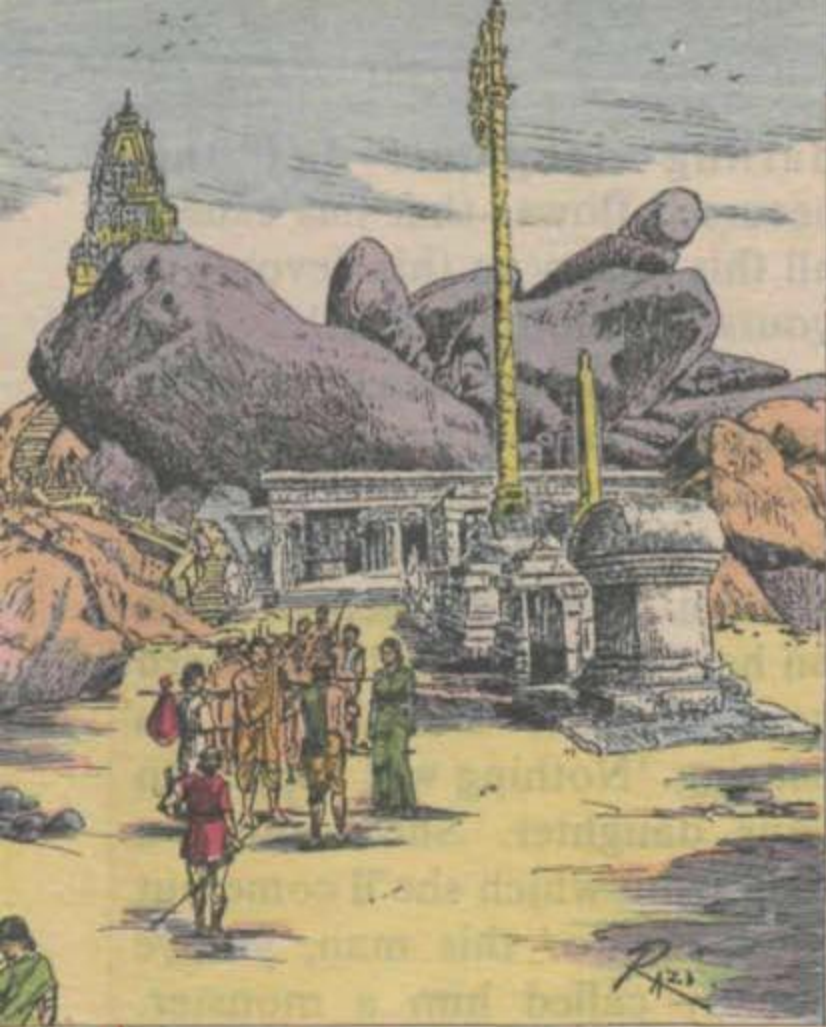
"What potion? Where did you get it from?" the priest asked him.

"Chandramani then explained how he had obtained the flowers and how he had made the potion with it. He avoided revealing his identity. Meanwhile, the priest ran inside the temple and immediately came out with a garland that had adorned the idol a while ago. He crushed it in his hand and threw the whole thing on Chandramani. 'O! Mother Lai-rembi!' he cried aloud, raising his head. 'I've served you all these years without seeking anything from you till now. You know how precious Bhagyasri is to me. Be kind to my only child and save her for my sake. Let the sky crumble down on this monster of a man for having harmed my

darling daughter! Let this accursed flower that has caused all this misery to this devotee of yours not bloom again!'

"When Kulshreshta lowered his head, he saw a bright light in front of him, which soon took the form of a bedecked divine woman. She had a benign smile on her face. 'My son! I've heard your prayers!' she said to his hearing. 'Nothing will happen to your daughter. She's under a spell from which she'll come out soon. As for this man, you've already called him a monster. That he'll be, and he won't have a place on this earth! The flower is by itself not to be blamed for this tragedy; it was misused by an evil-doer. However, it will take a punishment and will not blossom for many, many years and will thus not harm your generation and the next. Whenever it blooms again, even if it causes misery, it will be left to those who live with nature to thwart all evil designs. After all, nature has its cycle and human beings have to take it in their stride. For the present, forget all that had happened and come and perform the *arti* for me by your own hand! I'm waiting for you!'





“There was no doubt, it was Mother Lairembi Herself who had appeared before the priest. When Kulshreshta came out after performing the *arti*, the people told him how Chandramani had run away from them and how they saw a giant of a figure disappearing into the horizon. As it had its face turned away from them, they couldn't see what kind of monster he had become.

“King Chandrakant felt ashamed of his brother and his wily ways. When the priest realised that it was the king's brother whom he had cursed, he went and

offered apologies to the king. Chandrakant consoled him and said he should send Bhagyasri, after she came out of the spell, to the palace where she would be a companion to his own daughter, and enjoy the status of a princess.

“All this happened a long, long time ago. I remember to have read all about this in *Kantasmarana*, a long poem that pays tribute to the brave deeds of King Chandrakant. As far as people can recollect, this is the first time the flower has bloomed after that incident, almost a hundred years ago. Maybe that is the reason why it is called ‘Shatabdika’. But many probably do not know that its presence might mean some calamity. Fortunately, Maninagar had not experienced any famine, floods, or epidemic all these years, nor had it faced any danger from its neighbours. Ours has been a peaceful kingdom, and so my advice is, why then take a risk?” the Raj Guru concluded his narration.

King Pratapavarma immediately took over from him. “Priyamvada, the Raj Guru is of the opinion that we should not keep the flowers inside the palace.



We know, you won't have the heart to throw them away. So, as advised by him, we shall take the flowers away to some corner in the garden where, I am sure, they'll wither away before long."

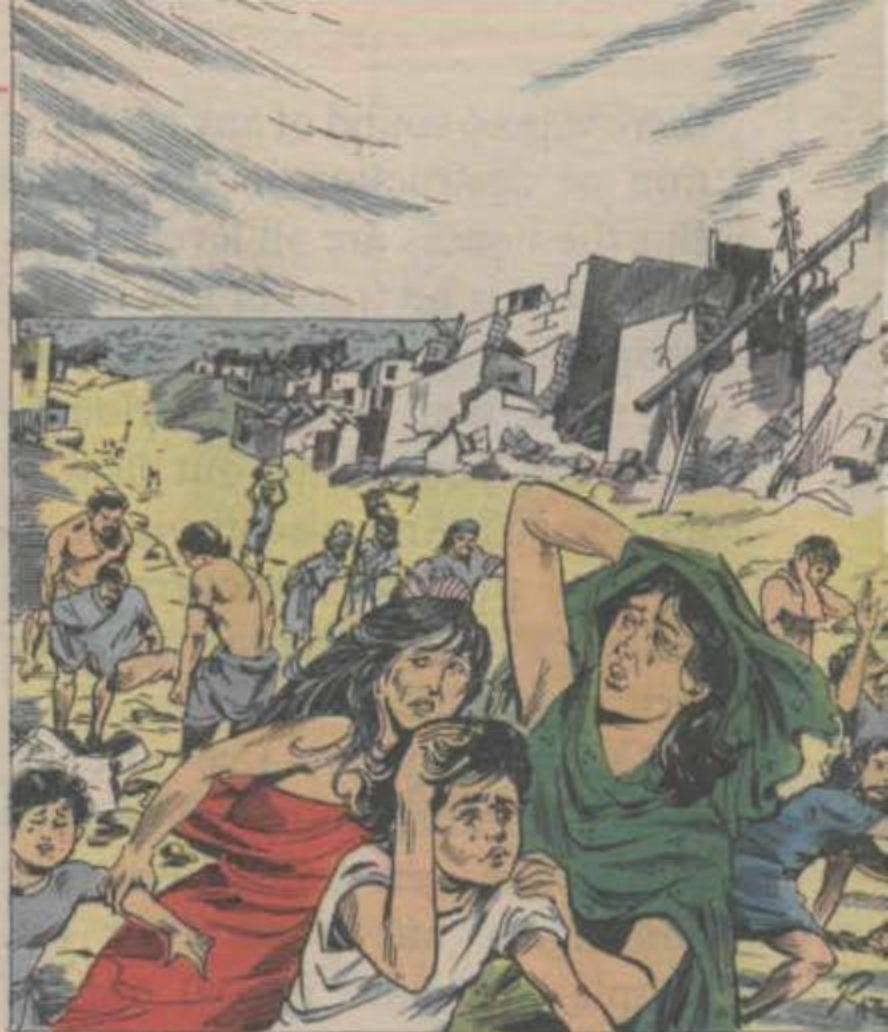
"That's what I, too, was thinking about, father," said Priyamvada. "Let the vase be taken to the garden. But O! venerable Guru, I must tell you, they're exotic flowers. It's really unfortunate that such lovely flowers carry a curse on them. I only hope our people won't have to face any tragedy or calamity during their life time."

Just then, one of the palace attendants went up to the king. "Your Majesty, Commander Ghambhir Singh seeks an urgent audience. He's waiting in the anteroom next to the *darbar* hall."

"Ask him to come here. Now that our Raj Guru is here, we can take his advice, too, if there's any need," said King Pratapavarma.

Soon Ghambhir Singh was ushered in. He first saluted the king and then paid his obeisance to the Raj Guru. "What news have you brought for us, this evening, Ghambhir? I hope it is nothing that can cause any anxiety."

"It does, Your Majesty," said



the Commander, taking a glance at the Raj Guru and the princess as well. "People from the southern parts have been running away in various directions since early morning and several of them are right now heading towards the capital. When they woke up, they found that a long row of houses near the sea coast have all been razed to the ground. I am told there is no sign of a tidal wave or a sea erosion, there was no earthquake, nor was there any landslide because there are no mountains anywhere nearby. The strangest part of it all is,

there was no sound of any commotion or destruction in the night. But the houses are all levelled up, and there is no trace of any of the people living in those houses till last night. It all looks mysterious!"

"Have you found out how it happened? And also thought of how to prevent a recurrence?" asked Pratapavarma, anxiety writ large on his face.

"Your Majesty, I've already sent a contingent of soldiers to patrol the sea coast. Another contingent has gone after the people who have moved out, to find out more details, and I've stationed soldiers to receive those heading for the capital and to arrange for their stay in homes and public places. I now await your directions, Your Majesty!"

"Father, can some of the people be allowed to stay in a portion of

the palace?" The princess showed her pity towards and concern for the victims. "We shall take care of the women and children."

"Yes, Priyamvada, that's a good suggestion," said Pratapavarma. "You can yourself decide which part of the palace we may spare for them, and you may go and see about the arrangements. The women and children should have the least inconvenience and worry. Ghambhir, you may take charge of the menfolk, but see whether they can also be engaged in the relief work elsewhere. O revered Guru, what'll be your advice?" he asked.

"Pratap, my son, I'm afraid my fears were not unfounded. This flower 'Shatabdika' has something to do with the calamity our kingdom is facing now!"

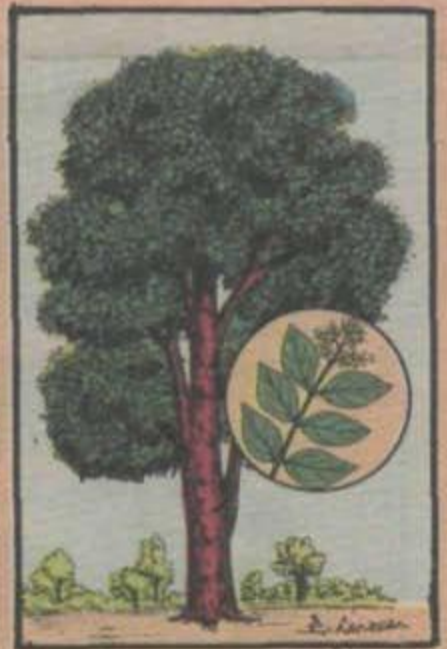
— *To continue*



WORLD OF NATURE

As good as gold

Advertisements these days prompt people to pay one thousand rupees for planting a teak sapling, with a promise to take care of the growing tree for the next 20 years. The fully grown tree will, then, yield wood worth a lakh of rupees—almost a hundred times of your 'investment' today. If that be so, won't you say, teak is as good as gold? Two Thai researchers will, however, modify it and say, teak *is* gold! Using the neutron activation technique, they found that a particular variety has gold particles when they sawed a tree for logs. This variety is called Sak Thong. In Thai language, Sak is teak, and Thong is gold. And gold is 'Thangam' in some of the south Indian languages!



Rings for trees

You know of different types of associations, don't you? But have you heard of an association in which trees are members? The Association of Elite Mother Trees in U.P. has 35,000 members—like the *neem*, *babul*, *jamun*, *amla*, *deodar*, *shisham*, and *oak*. The 'members' are given special protection to help them produce superior seedlings. This is how they "qualify" to become members: First, the tree should have a healthy look—healthier than the other trees in the vicinity. It must have a straight 'bole' or trunk and a compact 'crown' of branches and leaves. When chosen, it is called a 'plus tree', and receives a mark of distinction—a yellow ring around. The tree is

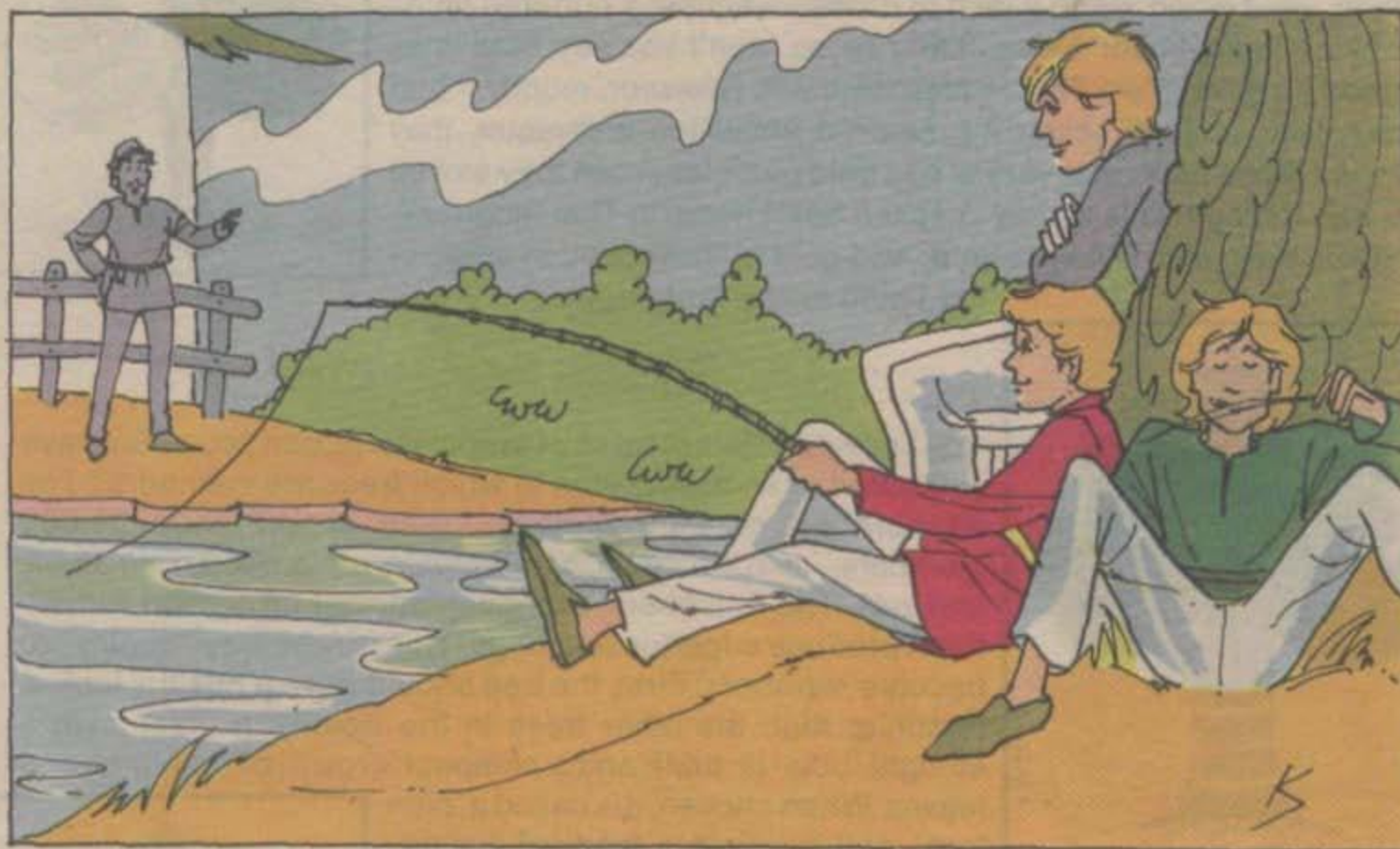
then given a 'progeny trial', when the seeds collected from it are sown in specially prepared beds in research nurseries. If the seedlings show "outstanding performance" in such tests as growth rate, and resistance against drought, heat, and insect attack, the tree is called 'elite mother' and gets another yellow ring painted around it. If the seedlings sent to other areas report a healthy growth, the 'mother' is given a third yellow ring!

The tallest one

A giant Sierra Redwood that grows in the Humboldt State Park in California is 113 metres tall and is considered the tallest standing tree in the world. It has a nickname—Harry Cole! It was discovered only in July 1988. By counting the ring sections on its pole or trunk, its age has been fixed at nearly 3,000 years. The tallest tree ever measured was an eucalyptus in Victoria, Australia—132 metres, though another eucalyptus, also in Victoria, is *believed* to have measured 143 metres.



THE BURIED GOLD



Long, long ago, there lived a poor farmer. He was honest and industrious. From dawn till evening, he toiled in his field and provided for his family. He had three young sons but, alas, they were good-for-nothing loafers. They whiled their time away, sitting under the tree eating berries, or dozing by the river with their fishing-line dangling in the water. Never were they kind and dutiful to assist their hard-

working parents.

"You've such a good stretch of land. Why don't you lend your arms in tilling it?" asked the neighbours.

"Why should we?" replied the eldest, rather annoyed. "Our father works very well by himself and takes care of us. Why should we bother?"

Years rolled on and the lads grew up into strong well-built men. Their parents were now too

aged and could no longer work as before. The garden around the house remained untended and was overgrown with weeds and shrubs.

"Dear children, both of us have grown old and weak. We can't put in much labour now. Don't idle your hours away. It is high time that you took charge of our piece of land," the old farmer one day pleaded with his sons, tears in his eyes.

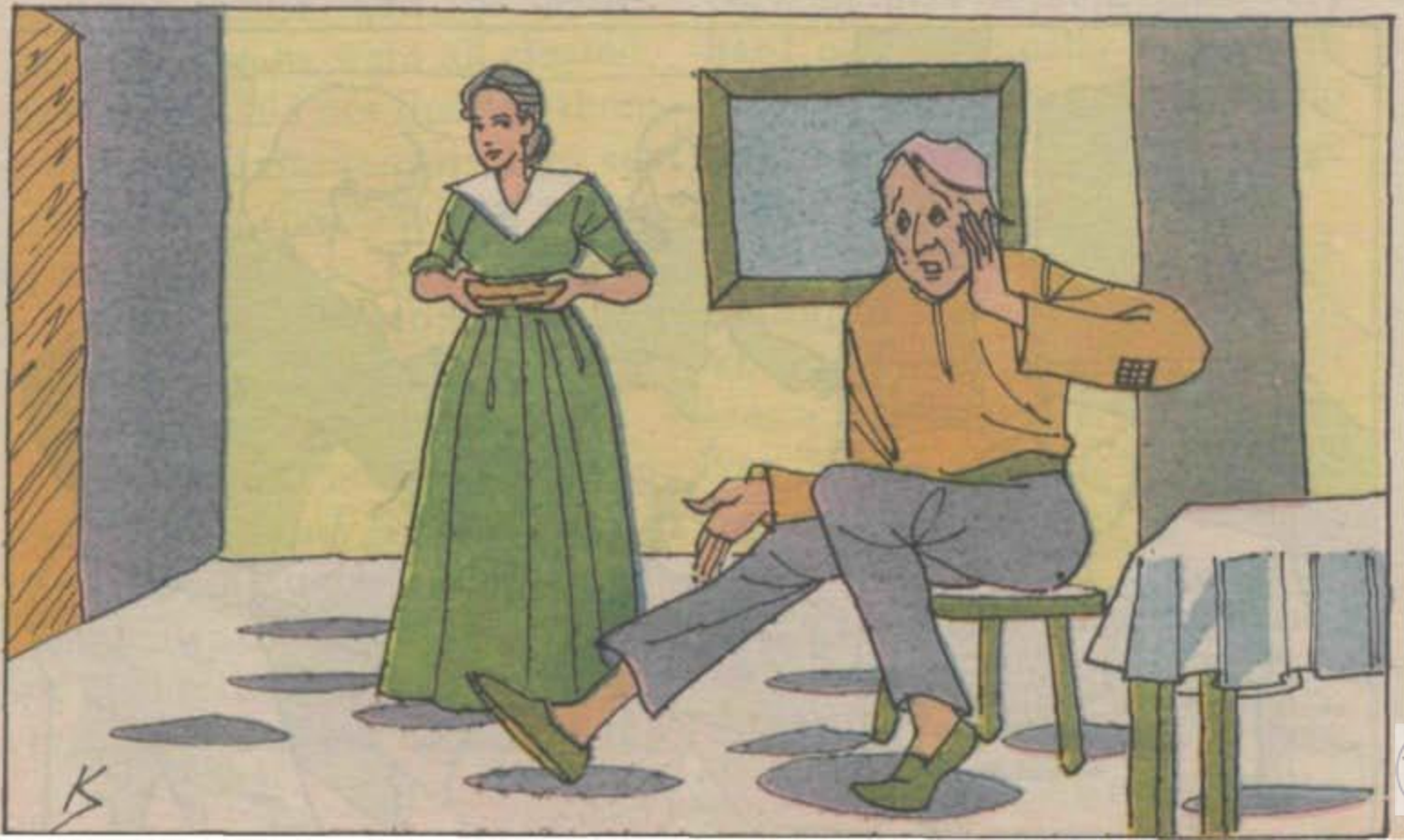
But the three young men turned a deaf ear to his words and whistled a merry tune. The farmer was, indeed, a very sad man.

"What has happened to the young generation? During our times and that of our forefathers, obeying the parents was the first duty of children!" remarked the old man to his wife.

"Yes, dear," replied the old woman, "the world has indeed changed, and the people have become more selfish."

The farmer fell into a deep reverie. How to bring about a change in his sons was his foremost worry.

Gradually the provisions ran out and the family was in the direst need. Greatly worried and troubled, the old man fell very ill.



He called his sons one day to his bedside, and calmly said, "I'm going to die. Tell me, my dear ones, loafers that you are, how're you going to live when I'm no more?"

The three sons were shaken out of their wits. They had never imagined that their father, who had till then supported them, would one day die!

"Father," they said, anxiety writ large on their faces, "please give us your parting advice. How should we lead our lives?"

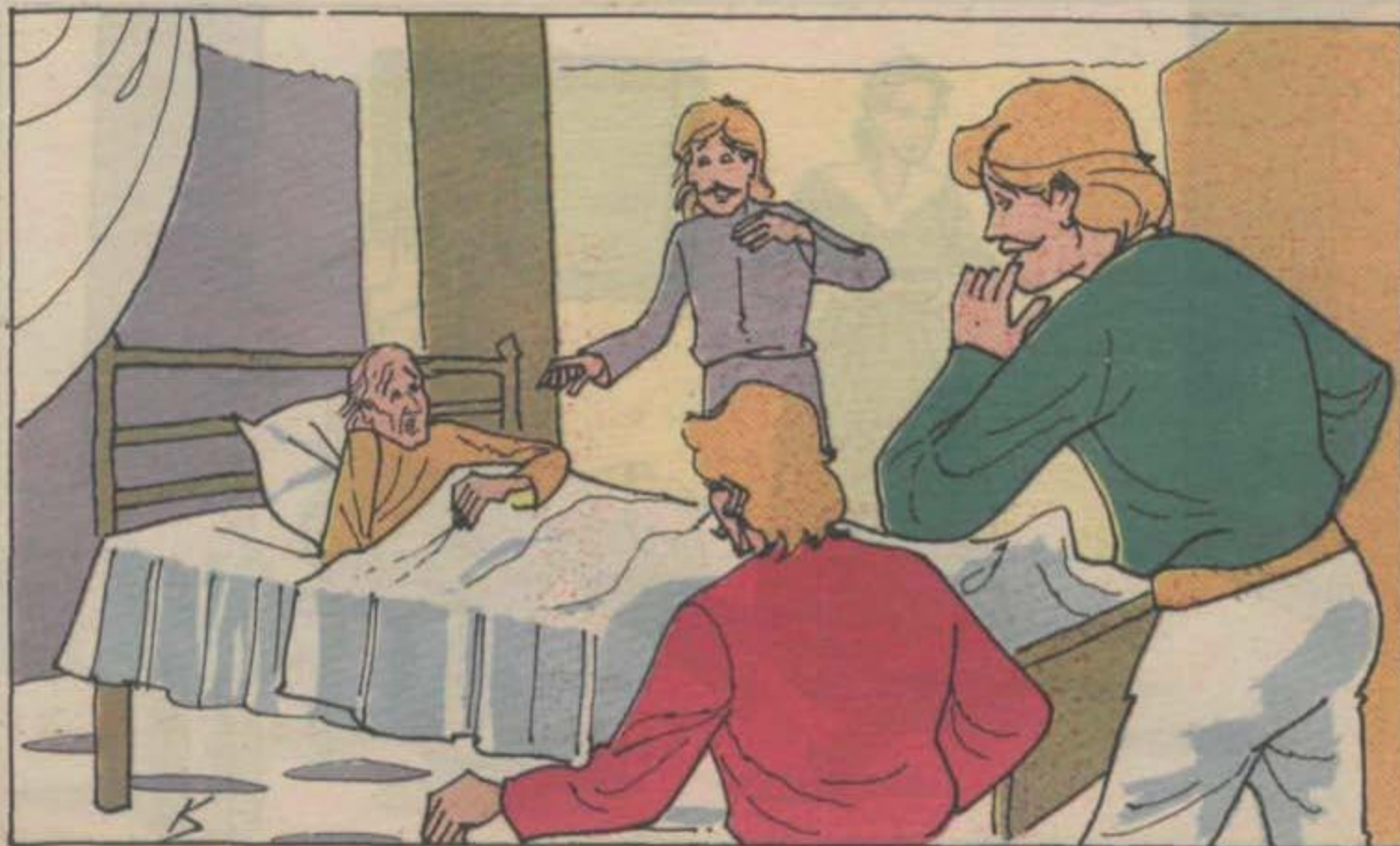
"Counsel I shall give you no more, for all these years you've paid no heed to them. Instead, I'll

share with you a great secret," replied their father in a faint voice.

"What's it? Do tell us at once, before it's too late," said the three sons excitedly.

"You know," continued the old man quietly, "your mother and I have toiled ceaselessly till the last bit of our strength had been spent. Over the years, little by little, we have saved three pots of gold. But they're buried in our land, I don't remember exactly where. Find them and you'll never know any want and can live happily ever after."

With these words, the good old



farmer bade good-bye to his sons and breathed his last.

It was not before long that the three brothers set out to do their father's bidding and find the three pots of gold. For the first time in their life they picked up spades and marched into the field.

They began to dig, and dig from morn till night for several days at a stretch. But there was no sign of the buried treasure.

"Let us now dig around the house. Father might have laid them there," proposed the youngest brother.

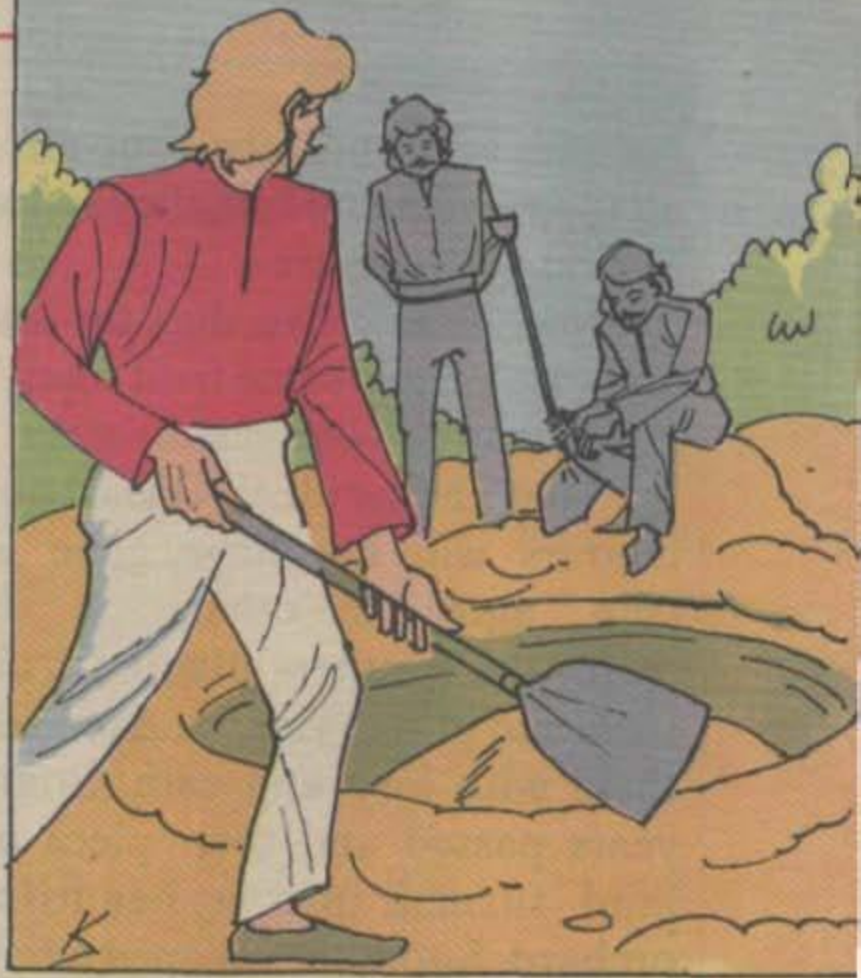
So the ground near their little dwelling was dug many times, and the thistles and the nettles and the shrubs were all cleared. But they could not find the three pots of gold. Exhausted, they sat down under the shade of a tree and pondered.

"Let's dig still deeper. The pots obviously are buried very deep," said the second brother.

They agreed and began to dig once more. They dug for a long time, from sunup to sundown. Suddenly, the spade held by one of the brothers struck something big and solid. He beckoned the

others, who rushed to the spot, their hearts pounding wildly. Now all three of them toiled very hard and frantically to unearth the object. Alas, what they found were not pots of gold but a large rugged rock!

The brothers were, indeed, disappointed. Nevertheless knowing well that their father was not a man to lie, they did not lose hope, and started digging again. They worked for many more days, seldom stopping to eat or rest. Three times they had already dug up the entire land and the soil under their spade had



become soft and nice. But after all their sweat and toil, they failed to find the treasure.

"Now that we've dug up our land, let's plant some fruit trees," proposed the youngest brother.

"That's a fine idea! At least our labours will not have gone in vain," agreed the others.

So, the brothers planted fruit trees and grape-vines and tended them with love and care. Some years passed and their piece of land turned into a beautiful orchard. Soon, they reaped a rich harvest of ripe juicy fruits. They sold the produce in the market and made handsome profits.

As they were returning home, they stopped in their orchard, surveying the lush green trees.

Suddenly, the elder brother exclaimed, "Indeed, how right our father was!"

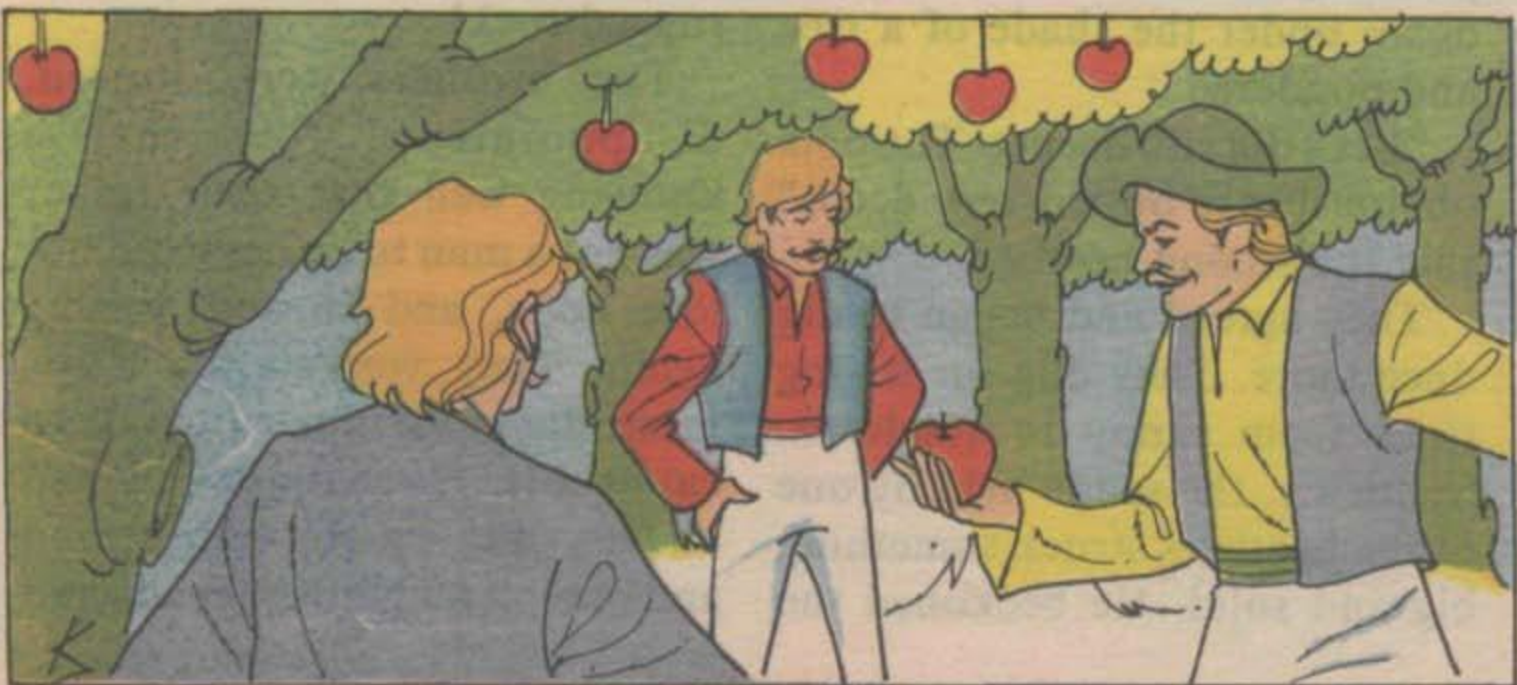
"What do you mean?" asked the other two.

"What are these if not pots of gold? And haven't they emerged from the soil?" replied the eldest, drawing the attention of his brothers to the trees.

"True, true!" agreed the second brother. "Had we struck those pots of gold, we would have spent them in no time. But *this gold* is inexhaustible!"

"Right!" said the youngest. "And how cleverly our father taught us how to find joy in work!"

—Retold by Anup Kishore Das



CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-55

BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

A Tunnel for a Nest



Very few birds prefer the ground, rather than the trees above, to build their nests. The Kingfisher is one. The nesting sites are generally the banks of streams. The bird digs a tunnel into the soft bank, a metre or more long. The tunnel widens into a chamber where five to seven eggs are laid at a time. The nesting season is between March and June.

There are more than a hundred species of the Kingfisher all over the world, but the most common is the white-breasted ones which are as small as the mynahs. They have wings coloured a brilliant blue, with rust-brown underparts and a conspicuous white breast. Its red, pointed bill is quite sharp and strong and is used for catching fish, tadpoles, and insects. The bird can be seen perched on a branch over a stream or pond. On sighting a prey, it takes a swift dive. When it comes out, it beats the fish on a rock and then swallows it, head first.

The black-and-white Pied Kingfisher is more spectacular in this act. It flies to and fro above the water and, on spotting a fish, it hovers for a few minutes before it takes a dive "like a bolt" to catch the quarry.

The Himalayan Pied Kingfisher is bigger than the other two and is seen at some 800 metres above the sea level.



INDIA THROUGH HER LITERATURE

India is a great country which has nurtured so many languages and so many cultures through the ages. Each major language of India has a rich literature. We know more or less about the great books of the past. But we know little about the outstanding books of our own times. In these pages, Chandamama will tell you the stories of the novels of our age, written in different Indian languages. The narration will be very brief, but we hope, this will inspire our readers to read the full book in original or in translation.

— Editor

THE DREAM COMES TRUE!



Pullaiya, the brave and good-natured young villager who could charm everybody by his lathi-play and tiger-dance, had a dream: he will marry and beget a son who will surpass him in valour. Pullaiya hated liars and thieves. He dreamt that his son would become famous as a thief-catcher.

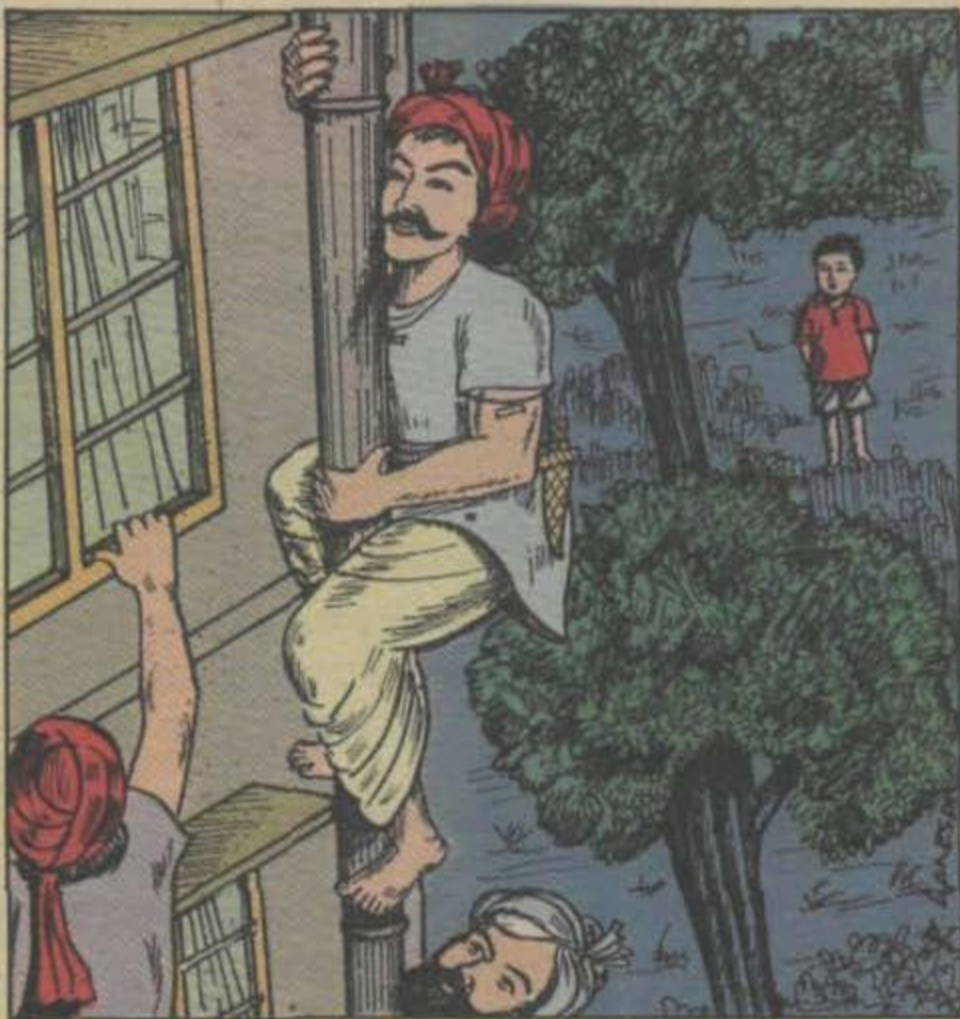
He married the girl of his choice—Nilli. They were a poor couple, but honest and hard-working. Nilli, like her husband, loved truth. They were happy with the crop they got from the land they tilled. The land, of course, belonged to someone else and they had to part with the owner's share. They were soon blessed with a lovely son—Mallu.

But things began to change. Because rice was not available in several parts of the state, the government obliged the farmers in the village to part with a portion of their yield. Pullaiya thought that the quantity demanded of him was unjust. He obstructed the officials from taking away his rice. When the police intervened, he turned violent. He was arrested.

Raju, the wealthy villager who provided Nilli with money to get her husband released, tightened his grip on them, taking heavy interest against the amounts he loaned to them. At last, Raju bought the land which Pullaiya tilled and drove him out

of it. A blind old villager, who had many reasons to punish the cruel Raju, hit him one night. Though he did so of his own accord, it was believed that he was acting as Pullaiya's henchman. Pullaiya was to be arrested again, but he transferred his own small house to Raju and wriggled out of the situation.

With his land and his house gone, Pullaiya, with his family, shifted to the town. Once an honest, upright and proud man, Pullaiya was now reduced to a state of misery. His unfailing source of strength, however, was his wife and his great love for his smart little son.



Pullaiya desperately tried to find a job, but to no avail. His wife and son were starving. By and by, he fell into the company of two burglars. Soon he got over his hesitation and became one among them.

One night, the three decided to steal from the upper storey of a rich man's house. But the rich man woke up and aimed his gun at the two of them who were in the process of climbing the pipeline. Pullaiya hit the man on his head in time to save his accomplices. The gun misfired and all the three escaped, but there was a commotion.

Unknown to Pullaiya, his little son Mallu, who was very fond of him, had followed him stealthily. The boy was curious to know why his father should refuse to take him along.

He had seen father climbing the building. In the morning, when Pullaiya did not return, the boy concluded that he was detained in that house. He went there and, in his innocence, demanded to see his father. The police questioned him and he told them what he had seen. He also gave out the names of his father's companions.

The police nabbed the thieves easily!

Thus Pullaiya's wish that his son should become a thief-catcher became true! But what an irony!

Nilli alone emerged a clean and confident character through all the ordeals.

B. Kantharao's *Dagapadina Tammudu* or the 'Defeated Hero' is a moving novel in Telugu—a convincing and sensitive picture of life in a typical Andhra village as well as in a town as experienced by an innocent miscreant from the village. This is a novel of recent times and has been translated into several Indian languages.



DO YOU KNOW?

1. Name the Indian festival celebrated once in 12 years.
2. A mythological creature has the head and arms of a man and the body of a horse. Identify the creature.
3. Where are the famous Khajuraho temples located?
4. The river Danube cuts through an East European city. Which city?
5. Which was the capital of the Chola dynasty in South India?
6. One country in South Asia was never a colony of another country. Which country?
7. Who is popularly known as India's Shakespeare?
8. Which is the tallest mountain that has its base on the ocean floor? Name? Height?
9. Megasthenes the Greek was sent as ambassador by which king, to which Indian King's court?
10. How is the flower rafflesia famous?
11. Name the Rajput princess whom Akbar married.
12. What is the average life span of the common housefly?
13. Which is the largest lake in Africa?
14. How many bones are there in the human skull?
15. When the Portuguese landed in present-day Sri Lanka, what name did they give to the island?
16. Which god, according to the Hindu mythology, rides the rain cloud?
17. He was a teacher as well as a journalist before he became a dictator. Who was he?
18. Who was given the first Nobel Peace Prize?
19. Like the Bible for Christians, what is the holy book of the Sikhs called?
20. The bark of a tree yields Quinine used for curing malaria. Name the tree.

ANSWERS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 12. Four days | 1. Kumbh Mela |
| 13. Lake Victoria (27,000 square miles), lying between Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. | 2. Centaur, in Greek mythology |
| 14. The skull is a formation of 29 separate bones. | 3. In Madhya Pradesh, India |
| 15. Zeylan, which was subsequently turned into Ceylon by the English. The Republic of Sri Lanka was established in 1972. | 4. Budapest—Buda on one side, and Pest on the other side of the river. |
| 16. Lord Indra. The mount is called Airavat. | 5. Tanjore |
| 17. Mussolini of Italy | 6. Thailand (former Siam) |
| 18. Jean Henri Dunant, the founder of Red Cross, in 1901. | 7. Kalidasa who too wrote several plays. |
| 19. Adi Granth, also known as the Guru Granth Sahib | 8. Mauna Kea in Hawaii is 32,000 ft. high, of which 13,784 ft. rise above the sea. |
| 20. Cinchona. | 9. The Greek King Seleucus I, to the court of Chandragupta Maurya. |
| | 10. It is the largest flower in the world; it grows in Indonesia. |
| | 11. Jodh Bai |



THE LIGHTER SIDE

The Most Foolish of All



Once there were four friends; each of them had one peculiarity or another. Hanumanthayya had a hump on his back. Lakkappa was a lame; he had only one leg. Balayya was blind; he had lost one eye. Bukkappa was bald; not one single strand of hair grew on his head.

The four would often meet at some place and tell each other how the day had fared for them. Because of the hump, Hanuman-

thayya was unable to lie down flat on his back; he was compelled to lie on his sides which soon became irksome and irritating, as every time he wished to change sides, he had to get up, lest he hurt the hump or it pained. So much so, he could not enjoy long, undisturbed sleep. He thought and thought and, suddenly, an idea struck him. He ordered a cot with strings and secretly made a hole where the hump would rest



That night he could lie on his back and had a good sleep.

The next day, his friends saw him bright and cheerful, unlike the previous days for a very long time. "What has happened, Hanumanthayya?" queried one of them. "Have you come to any fortune?"

"From where can I get any fortune, my good friend?" replied Hanumanthayya, disappointedly. "Last night, I slept very well—after several days!" He then went on to explain how he managed it.

After a couple of days of

undisturbed sleep, the next night he wished he could sleep on his sides again. He turned on one side for some time; he then turned the other way round. "Creek!" cried the cot. The strings were slowly giving way, but Hanumanthayya was so fast asleep that he did not hear the strings creaking. So much so, long before it was daybreak, he woke up. "Thud!" He had slipped to the floor through the hole he himself had made on his brand new cot! In the process, he had also hurt his hump. That day, when he met his friends, he put on a brave face, though the hump was paining still. He felt too shy to tell them about his misadventure.

In those days, there was a custom among men to take more than one wife, if they could afford to maintain a large family. Lakkappa was a prosperous merchant and kept two wives. Lakshmi and Latha took to each other like sisters. When Lakkappa returned home in the evening, they would greet him at the portico and wash his feet—Lakshmi washing one foot and wiping it dry with the end of her

sari, and Latha washing the other foot. He would enter the house only after this exercise was meticulously gone through. There was no quarrel in the family for any reason—till, one day, Latha was not present in the house when Lakkappa returned home. She had gone to look up her ailing father and was delayed on her way back home.

Without realising the consequences, he allowed Lakshmi to wash both his feet, so that he could go inside without waiting for Latha indefinitely. He had hardly got in and changed his clothes when Latha stormed into the house guessing what might have happened. Without asking anybody anything, she went to her room and did not come out to serve food to her husband. She took it for granted that Lakshmi had usurped *her* rights as well to look after their husband, and counted the minutes to take revenge on—no, *not on* Lakshmi, but on Lakkappa.

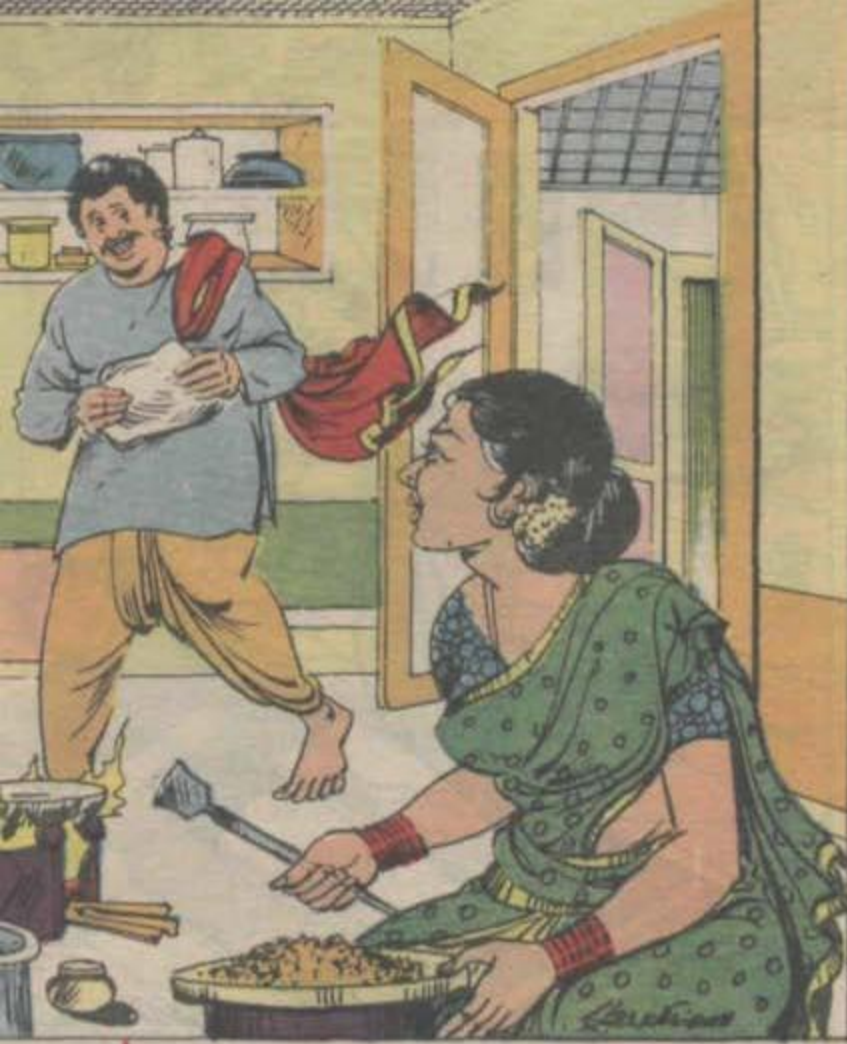
After dinner, while he was resting with eyes closed and contemplating how he would humour Latha the next day to enable her to forget and forgive



his indiscretion, Latha tiptoed into the room, a pestle in hand. She did not have enough strength to raise the heavy thing in her hand and strike him with it. So, she dropped it on his leg with some force and ran back to her room.

Lakkappa cried aloud, and got up limping. His cries brought Lakshmi to him. She took stock of the situation in a trice. She, too, was struck with a guilty conscience, though she knew she had washed his second foot only at his bidding. But she could understand Latha's feelings and





so quietly nursed Lakkappa to relieve his pain and put him to sleep. When he got up, the pain had not left him and as it continued for several days, he ultimately had to get it amputated, lest the leg gave him more trouble. Meanwhile, Latha was too proud to ask for Lakkappa's pardon or to talk with Lakshmi. She decided she now had no place there and went back to her own house where, on the death of her father, there was no one to look after her widowed, ageing mother. Lakkappa was not sure who he should blame for the turn

of events. More than that, he was ashamed to tell his friends all that had happened. They only knew that there was an accident when a pestle fell on his feet!

Stranger was Bukkappa's experience. A farmer, he was busy because it was harvest time. One of the farm hands rushed to him and gave him the glad news that his wife had given birth to a baby girl. He left all work and hurried home via the village market-place, where he bought some clothes for the mother and child. On reaching home, he was surprised to see his wife attending to the usual chores; and there was no sign of any baby.

"Where's the baby?" he asked her.

"Baby?" she replied in wonderment. "What baby?" Then she saw the packet in his hand. She asked curiously, "What's that you've in your hand?"

"Oh! This?" said Bukkappa. "Some clothes for you and the baby!"

"But why so soon?" the woman giggled. "Our baby will come only after four or five months!"

Suddenly, Bukkappa realised

his folly. True they were expecting a baby much later, and look at that! He had gone and bought clothes for somebody else's wife and child! His head reeled, the packet flew from his hands, and he himself swooned and fell down, hitting the *choolah* on which his wife was cooking food. The vessel toppled down from the stove, and his hair got singed in the fire. To cut it short, that portion of his head went bald.

His friends looked at each other when one day he appeared with a turban on his head, which was an unusual sight. They had never seen him wear a turban but, luckily for him, they did not ask him any inquisitive questions—till, one day, it fell off, revealing the bare pate. He told them of the accident, but not the circumstances leading to it.

That leaves Balayya. How did he become blind? It was all due to an equally foolish act. He was having an afternoon siesta when he was suddenly disturbed by the shouts of children outside. He suffered the noise for some time and later got up, cursing the children. But when he saw them enjoying their game of 'blind



man's-buff', he did not have the heart to scold them. Instead, he stood on one side and joined in their bursts of shouts.

One of the children went up to him. "Uncle, why don't you play with us? Let's see whether you'll be able to touch anyone of us!" The little boy was so enthusiastic that he did not wait for an answer from Balayya. He loudly announced that "uncle" would join in their game. "Hip, hip, hurrah!" shouted the children.

"Uncle Balayya! Uncle Balayya!" they chanted, as the tallest among them blindfolded

him with a large kerchief. He alone could reach up to his face. "Uncle Balayya!" The shouts came from hither and thither, and he ran thither and hither to catch or touch the child he thought was nearest to him. He did not succeed. The afternoon sun was quite strong and hot. Soon, he was panting and perspiring and lost his sense of direction. The children, who were hiding behind trees and bushes, did not see him fall down.

In fact, he had stumbled over a low tree branch and fell headlong, hitting the stump of a branch that had been cut. The children came to his aid and

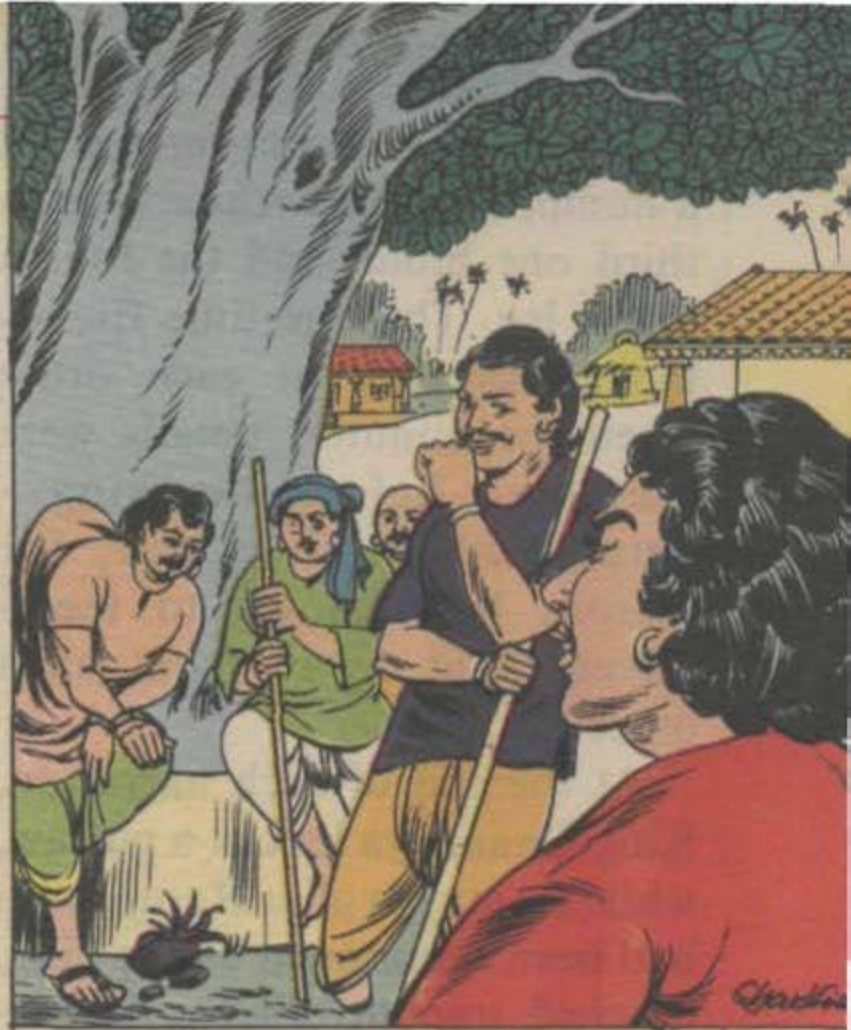
removed the blindfold. Luckily, there were no major injuries. However, his right eye was paining. He went home and washed his face, eyes particularly, several times. He did not want to scare his wife by telling her about the fall and injury to his eye. He kept quiet about the whole thing—till the eye swelled into a huge ball. By the time the swelling subsided, he found that he could not see with that eye. He felt ashamed to tell his friends that he had played blind man's-buff—at his age! He blamed an insect and its bite at night for the swollen eye whenever he met his friends.



Thus the four friends avoided telling each other how foolish each of them was, when came along a nitwit of the village. Normally, they would detain Ramayya and take pleasure in teasing him and listening to his foolish prattle. He was popular in the village and people called him Ram-ji suffixing a title of respect at the end of his name. That day, he gave a perfunctory salute to them and was about to hurry away, when Bukkappa asked him, "Ramji, who were you saluting to?"

Ramji, raised his chin, posed as if he was drawing inspiration from the Lord above, and replied, "Whoever is the greatest fool among you!" and ran away.

Now, all four of them—Bukkappa, Balayya, Lakkappa, and Hanumanthayya—felt that Ramji had insulted them. Each of them also wondered how a nitwit like Ramji had come to know of his foolish act or behaviour. Without realising that they were now really being foolish, each of them began to claim that Ramji had saluted to him, and not to the three others. Soon, a quarrel broke out between them and,



they could not resolve it for several days because none of them was ready to disclose all the details of his folly to assess its gravity or 'greatness'.

Ultimately, they took their dispute to King Gnanayya. He laughed aloud when they lined up in front of him and asked him to decide who among them was the greatest fool! He told them he would listen to them one after the other, asking them to recollect the most foolish of their acts. In their anxiety to score over each other, each of them for the first time came out with the full



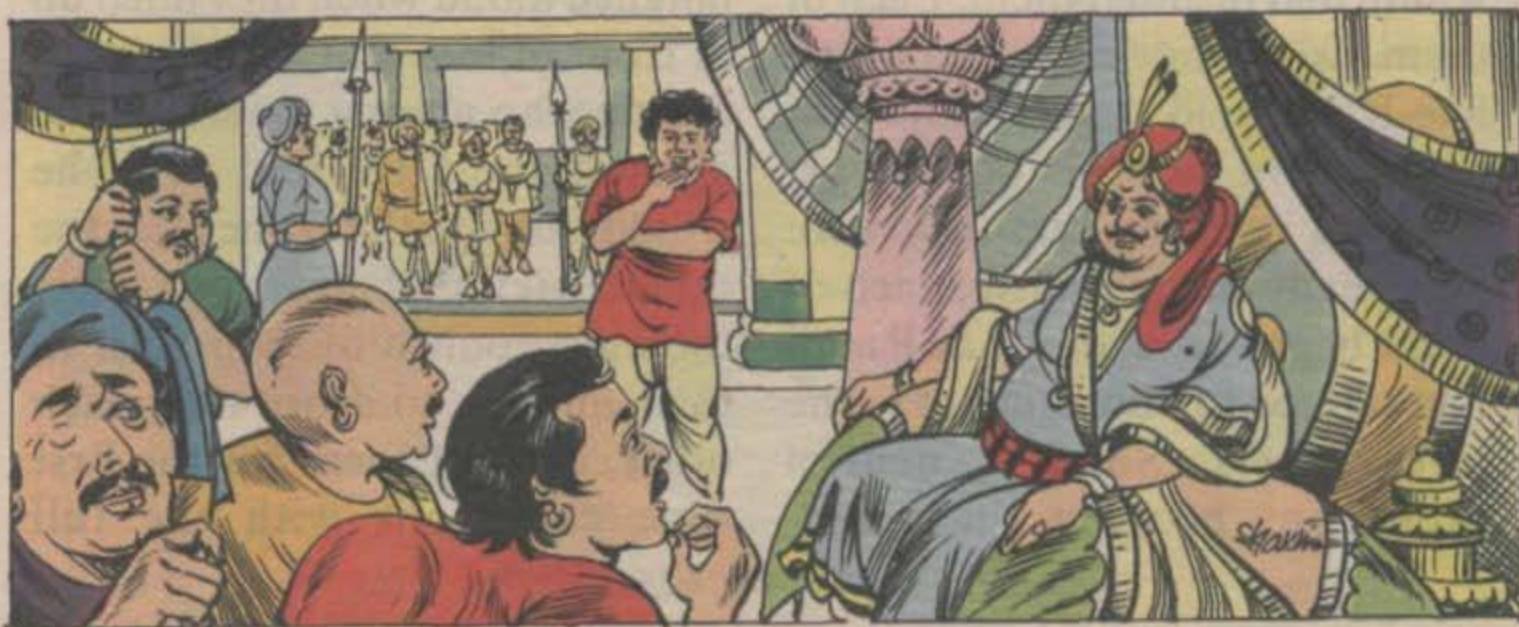
story—of how one suffered from a hump, another became bald, a third one blind, and the fourth lost a leg. The one-time friends looked askance at each other when the minutest details were presented before the king—details which they had, for reasons best known to themselves, kept away from each other.

At the end of each narration, King Gnanayya let out a guffaw, while Ramayya alias Ramji, who had been summoned by the king, laughed uncontrollably, forgetting that he was in the august presence of the king himself. Before the king pronounced his judgement, Ramayya bowed low to him and declared, "Your Majesty, it was unwise of me to have not saluted to them individually that day. And it was foolish

of them to have asked me to whom I had saluted. I didn't then know that they were more foolish than I had taken them to be at that moment. And I don't think there is anyone more foolish in this kingdom than these four. If I'll have your permission, I shall salute each one of them now, in recognition of their foolish acts."

"Ramji, you may do so, you've my permission," said the king. "I hope they will be satisfied and go back as friends and decide not to think up anything foolish to quarrel about! And you, Ramji, have proved to be wiser than they and I decree that you'll henceforth be known as and called Ramayya. You'll have a place in my court."

The four friends looked foolish in their own eyes as they walked back home.





VEER HANUMAN

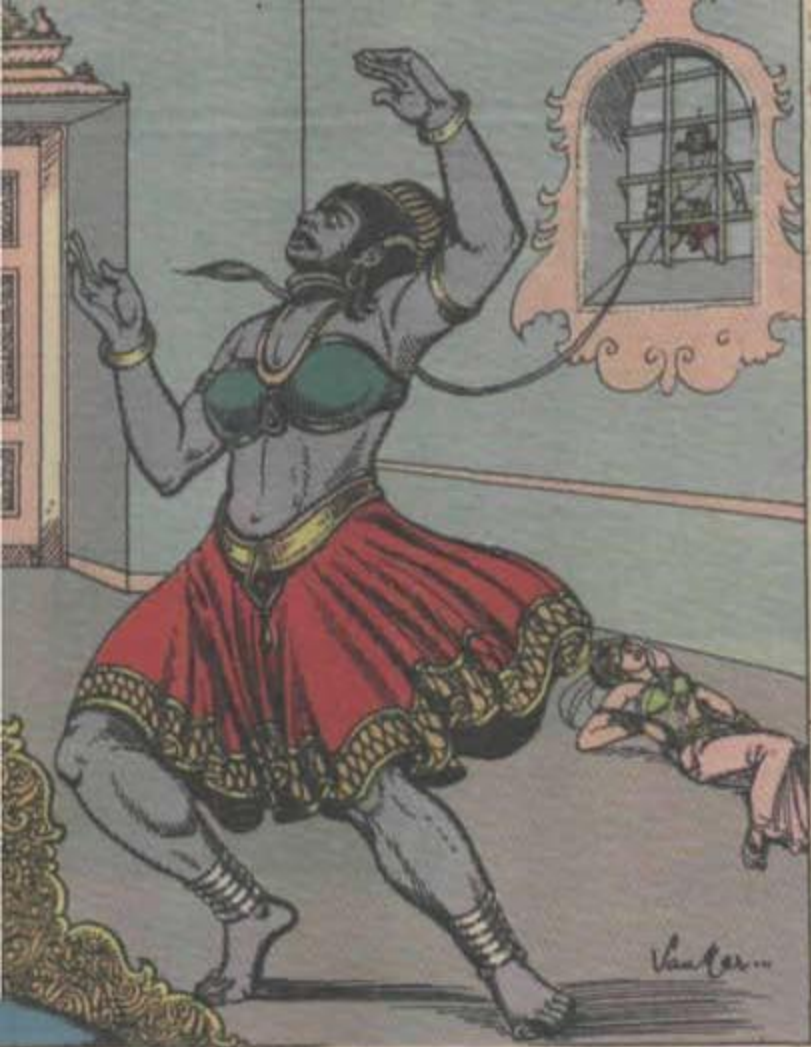
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(Hanuman enters Patala in search of Rama and Lakshmana, who have been spirited away by the king, Mahiravana. At the Kali temple, he sees preparations for a human sacrifice. He manages to rescue the brothers and take them out of Patala. Mahiravana is struck by shame and engages the three in a fierce fight. To kill the demon king, his secret of life without an end has to be found out. Only Chandrasena can reveal it.)

After taking the permission of Rama and Lakshmana when there was a lull in the fight with Mahiravana, Hanuman flew to the palace where the Patala king had kept Chandrasena. Strangely there was nobody to guard the beautiful palace. All the gatekeepers and guards were at that moment present at the

Kali temple. However, there was a ferocious serpent at the main entrance.

The moment it saw Hanuman, the serpent moved towards him at great speed. Its eyes were a fiery red and from its mouth came a cloud of smoke creating an eerie sight all around. The snake was now ready to pounce



on Hanuman, who attacked it with courage and force. Suddenly, he heard the cries of a young lady from inside the palace.

Hanuman then reduced himself to a tiny size and entered the serpent through its mouth. Once inside, he resumed his original size. The serpent lay dead in no time. Hanuman came out and rushed to where he had heard the loud cries coming from. As he neared the place, he could also hear the sound of whip lashes and the lady's cries now growing louder and louder.

Hanuman guessed that they might be from Chandrasena, and that she was being tortured for being instrumental to the escape of Rama and Lakshmana from the Kali temple. He soon reached the room where Chandrasena had been confined. It was quite large, when he peeped through the window, he could see the door shut, and Kandaki beating Chandrasena with a whip. "Bad times began for Mahiravana the moment he brought you here!" Kandaki was heard riling. "Didn't you cheat us? Whom did you send to the temple? Come on, out with the truth! Otherwise, today will mark your end as well! Let's see whether your accomplice will come and rescue you!" she shouted.

While he listened to Kandaki's peroration, Hanuman extended his tail through the window. The tail caught hold of Kandaki's neck and she was soon strangled. Hanuman forced open the door and entered the room. He bowed to Chandrasena and narrated to her how he had rescued Rama and Lakshmana. He asked her how Mahiravana could be overpowered.



The moment Hanuman mentioned Rama, the young lady chanted the name and for a while forgot all the trials and tribulations she had gone through. She bowed to Hanuman and said, "I shall give you the secrets of Mahiravana, but on one condition. You must promise that you will bring Rama to me after Mahiravana is killed."

Hanuman accepted her request and promised to take Rama to her. Chandrasena then disclosed where Mahiravana's breath of life was being kept and guarded. Hanuman took leave of her and crossed seven seas to reach the place where a huge lotus remained brilliantly lit. He sang in praise of Agni, the lord of Fire, before entering the flower. He found the inside of the lotus very strange. There were snakes, demons and all sorts of devilish characters and figures. Hanuman killed each one of them and penetrated deep into the flower. He reached a cave; a snake was guarding the mouth of the cave.

"You seem to have overpowered everybody on your way before reaching here! If so, you may not be any ordinary per-



son," remarked the serpent. "Only two very strong persons can enter the lotus—one of them is Mahiravana. Would you be the other power?"

Hanuman decided to humour the serpent. "If you think so, let it be like that. Give me way!"

"Don't think it is as easy as that!" said the serpent. "Try to go past me!"

Hanuman did not give the serpent a chance to get ready for a fight with him. He caught hold of the snake and twisted it by both hands. The serpent cried aloud. "I admit you're very

powerful. I've been under a curse and was living like a slave to Mahiravana. Today you've given me salvation from slavery," uttered the serpent which now assumed the form of a huge demon. "Please allow me to return to my worship of Lord Siva." He then disappeared.

There were no more hurdles to prevent Hanuman from entering the cave. Inside there was a huge casket, and a chest on top, circular in shape and bejewelled. Flames of fire arose from the lid so that none would touch it or try to open it. The flames were so hot that Hanuman felt he might be burnt if he were to stand before them for long. He tried to blow out the fire, but it only burnt more fiercely. He chanted the name of Agni, the lord of Fire. "O lord! I'm the son of your friend, Vayu. I seek your help which I need now very badly!"

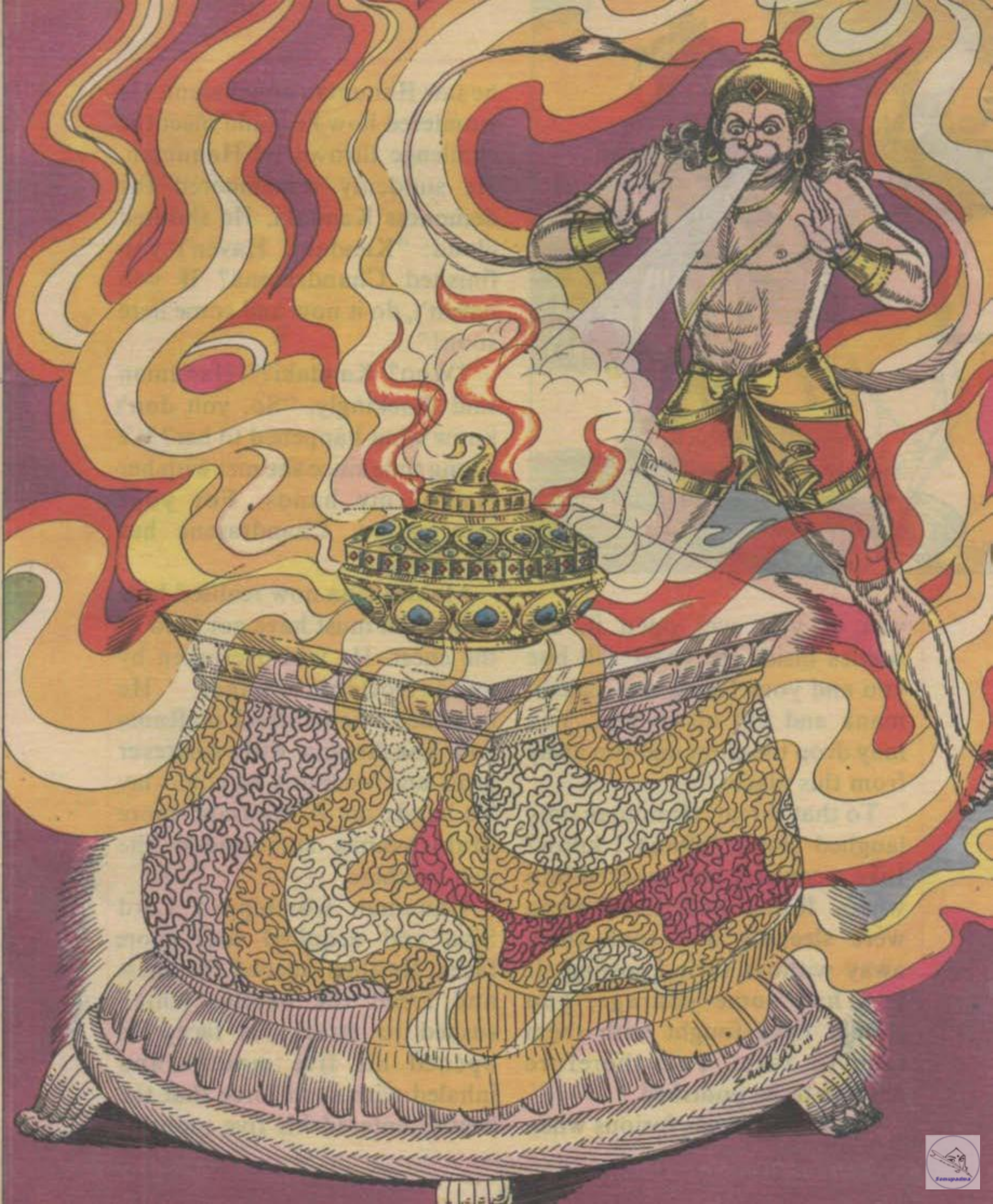
Lo and behold! The flames emanating from the chest suddenly died out. Hanuman thanked the lord of Fire for his timely help. A voice then arose from the chest. "I wanted to test you before I gave you certain directions, Hanuman. There are

five beetles guarding the life of Mahiravana. You must eat them at one and the same time. If you take away their life that way, you'll then achieve your objective. Remember! Five beetles all at once!"

Hanuman then carried the chest to where he had left Rama and Lakshmana. He found that Mahiravana had resumed the fight and there were thousands of Mahiravanas born of the droplets of blood from the Patala king fighting with Rama and Lakshmana. Hanuman dropped himself in their midst along with the chest. He showed it to Mahiravana. "Do you see this? I've managed to get hold of the chest which holds your life. I can do whatever I like with it. If you have any desire left in you to live, you better stop your fight and seek the pardon of Rama and Lakshmana!"

Mahiravana was shocked beyond belief when he saw the chest in the hands of Hanuman. But he pretended as if there was no threat to his life, "Don't be a fool, Hanuman! Don't think that I would be upset by seeing that chest in your hand! And I warn







you, if you ever open it, the beetles inside the chest will bite you and your Rama and Lakshmana and kill all of you. You may drop the chest and run away from this place!”

To that threat, Hanuman only laughed aloud. “Don’t I know? Like a coward, you sneaked into where Rama and Lakshmana were sleeping and took them away without their knowing. If you had some courage, you should have fought with them face to face. You therefore deserve to be punished.”

Mahiravana was furious when

he saw Hanuman nonchalant. He wondered how he could meet the challenge thrown by Hanuman. He suddenly remembered the demoness Kandaki. He shouted aloud: “Kandaki! Haven’t you finished Chandrasena? If you haven’t, do it now and come here soon!”

“Who? Kandaki?” Hanuman said mockingly. “So, you don’t know what happened to her? It’s a long time since she met with her end at my hands. For your information, Chandrasena has been freed!”

Mahiravana now realised how Hanuman must have got hold of the chest. He was overtaken by uncontrollable anger. He launched a fierce attack on Rama and Lakshmana with whatever arms and weapons he could lay his hands on. A thousand more Mahiravanas surrounded the two brothers.

Hanuman worshipped Lord Siva and acquitted four more faces. He then opened the chest and freed the beetles which rushed to attack his face. He opened his five mouths and inhaled with such force that the beetles entered his five mouths.



He chewed them and spat. At that very moment, the thousand odd Mahiravanas turned into tiny beetles and lay dead. Hanuman shouted in victory.

Mahiravana knew that there was no escape for him now. He began running away from the battle-field. Even while retreating, he would stop every now and then to engage in fight whoever was following him. Once it was Rama who sent an arrow at him. It went and hit Mahiravana on his head which was blown into several pieces. That was the end of the King of Patala or the nether world.

By now the devas from the heavens—like Brahma and Siva—had gathered in the sky to shower flowers on the victorious Rama and Lakshmana and the five-faced Hanuman. “Rama! That Mahiravana was a part of the lord of death, Yama,” said Lord Brahma. “And Hanuman, there, is a part of the Lord of Kailas. No wonder he was able to cross the seven seas and secure the chest with the beetles guarding the life of Mahiravana.”

Lord Siva was immensely pleased with Hanuman. “Your



prowess as well as knowledge have no limits,” the lord praised him. “It was not anything easy to have killed Mahiravana, who equalled Ravana in strength. You really helped Rama in annihilating that demon. By killing those enslaved beetles, you have given freedom to all those in the world suffering slavery. From now onwards, if people were to worship the five-faced Hunuman, they will not be bothered by ghosts and spirits and other unnatural elements.”

Hanuman assumed his real form and paid his obeisance to



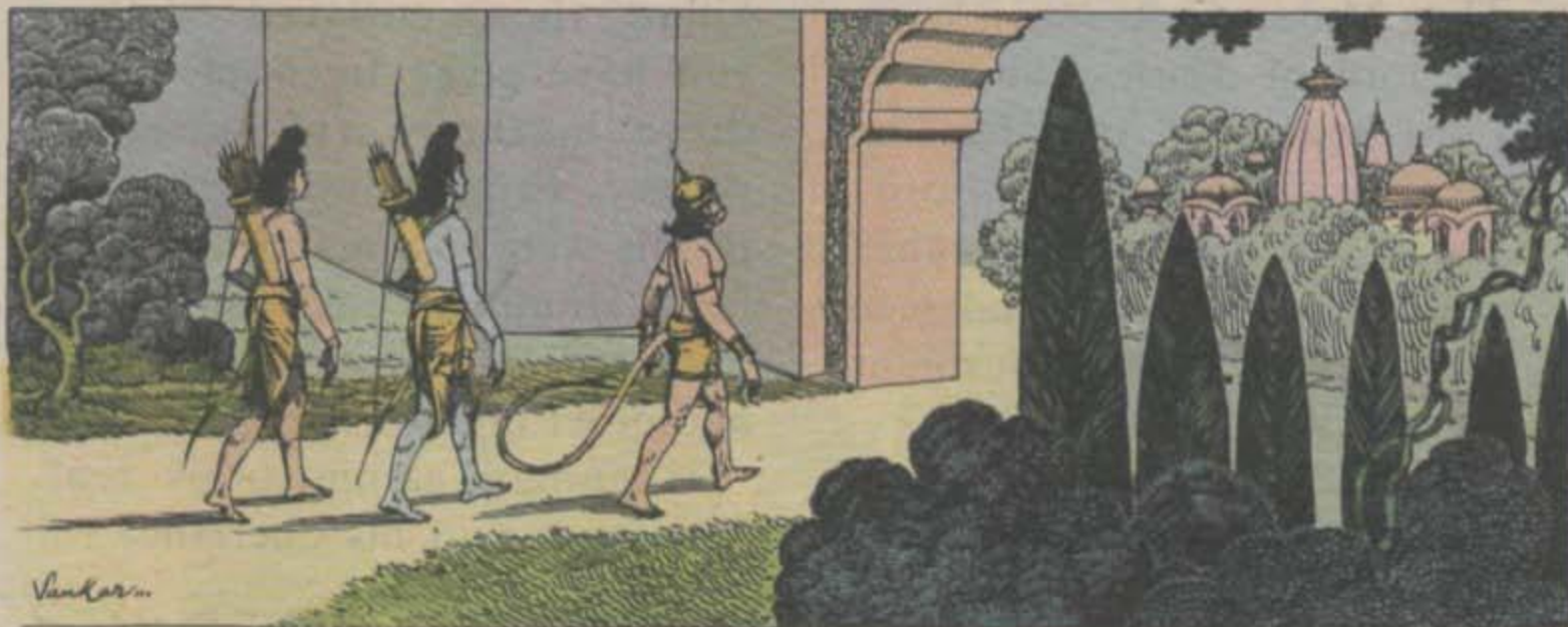
Brahma and Siva. They and all others from the Devaloka who had assembled there blessed Rama, Lakshmana and Hanuman before disappearing from their sight.

• Lord Brahma had told Rama that he should make Matsya Vallabha the King of Patala in place of Mahiravana. So, Rama asked Hanuman to go and bring Matsya Vallabha, the son of Swarchala. When he was brought to Rama, he prostrated before Rama who disclosed to him what Brahma had told him. Matsya Vallabha said he would accept Brahma's advice as the lord's word and abide by all his instructions and directions. Rama then crowned him the king of Patala.

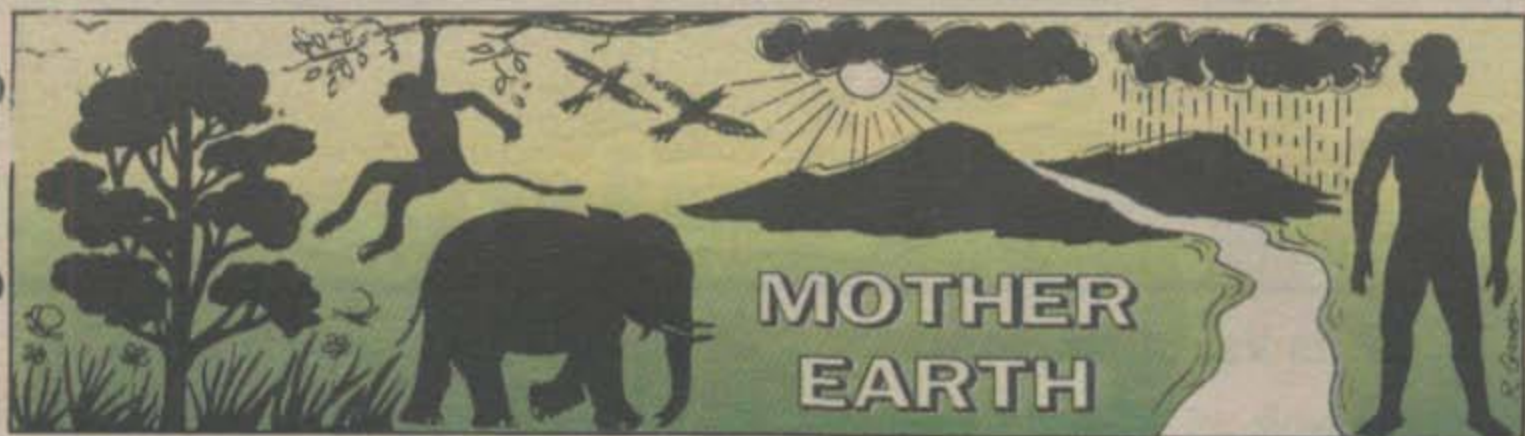
While Rama was resting, Hanuman disclosed to him his promise to Chandrasena. "She is a simple woman, spending all her time chanting your name. But for her help, I wouldn't have succeeded in knowing the secrets of Mahiravana and securing the chest with the five beetles. I had given her a promise that I would take you to Chandrasena. She must be eagerly awaiting your arrival at her palace. It is, therefore, only appropriate that we keep the promise and go to her."

"A promise has always to be kept," said Rama. "Take us there!" Hanuman then led the way and Rama and Lakshmana followed him, smiling.

(To continue)



Vandana



Nature's Aspirations

You know that trees were the first manifestation of life on the earth. But they are much more. What cures us when we fall ill? Most of the medicines—be they Ayurvedic or allopathic—are made from plants—from their roots, leaves, fruit, seed, bark, or juice.

They have still greater significance. The flowers are the dreams, hopes, aspirations, and assurances of Nature—dreams of true beauty, hopes for goodness, aspirations for truth, and an assurance that since all these qualities are inherent in Nature, man can manifest them in his own life. After all, man is the latest and the most conscious child of Nature!

One who knows how to meditate on flowers can trace their hidden qualities. According to the Mother (Sri Aurobindo Ashram), the lotus represents the Divine Consciousness, the rose represents Love for the Divine, the jasmine represents Purity, the lily represents true Wealth, the bougainvillea Protection, so on and so forth.

It has been seen that the fragrance of flowers can not only elevate our moods, but also cure certain ailments.

As a great Indian scientist, Jagadish Chandra Bose, proved, plants have their own feelings and reactions. Some researchers believe that plants respond even to music by swaying sweetly, and to harsh noise by growing pale.

Now, should we not be more respectful towards our trees?



Sports Snippets

Kids Vs. Champions

Chess whiz, 16-year-old Judit Polgar, beat former world champion Boris Spassky in a 10-game series held in Budapest in February. The Hungarian teenager scored 6.5 points against 3.5 scored by the Russian champion. The 20,000 dollar Polgar-Spassky match was sponsored by a Yugoslav entrepreneur. The winner's share was \$110,000. Polgar is the youngest of three chess-playing sisters, all of them with world rankings. Last year, she became the youngest international grandmaster ever, beating the American Bobby Fischer's record by one month. Polgar is currently the best woman player in the world.

In the Grandmaster tournament in Linares in March, the title went to Garry Kasparov of Russia when he beat former Soviet prodigy, Gata Kamsky (18 years) in 35 moves. In an earlier match, 17-year-old Russian Grandmaster Vladimir Kramnik had



held the world champion to a draw in just 19 moves.

Tennis titles

Jim Courier has been selected '1992 Player of the Year' in the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) circuit. He was honoured at the annual ATP Tour Awards Gala early in March, which was dedicated to the memory of the Davis Cup legend, Arthur Ashe, who died on February 6. Incidentally, Ashe was the first black to win the Wimbledon crown. He was named 'Humanitarian of the



Year'. An AIDS victim, he joined hands with the basketball superstar 'Magic' Johnson, another AIDS patient, to raise public awareness about the disease. Ashe had won 33 titles during his tennis career.

Stefan Edberg, who raced against Courier for the No. 1 position in 1992, was given the "Sportsmanship Award" by the Tour players. The Australian players, Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge were voted the "Doubles Team of the Year". Andre Medvedev (18) of Ukraine was named



the "Newcomer of the Year". He reached the No.21 ranking at the end of the year. Henri Leconte of France, who lost his ranking because of absence from tournaments following a surgery, retrieved his position and came to No. 61. He was named "Comeback Player of the Year"!

Out to conquer cricket

He scored a double century; yet when he was caught at 224, he was so angry with himself that he threw away the very bat which gave him the runs! That was 21-year-old Vinod Ganpat Kambli, and the incident took place during the Bombay Test against England in the third week of February. An elder team-mate told him that "success is to be enjoyed, a moment to be shared with team-mates than in self-recrimination." That moment



came to Kambli, again. In India's very next Test against Zimbabwe in Delhi three weeks later he scored another double century, to become the first Indian player to make double centuries in two successive Tests. He thereby joined such titans as Walter Hammond of England and Donald Bradman of Australia, who made such records for their countries in 1928-29 and 1934 respectively. Of course, they both had another distinction: in one innings,

Hammond had scored 336 not out, and Bradman 304. However, Kambli's distinction is that he is the youngest in the world to have reached that landmark, though his 224 in Bombay was 12 short of Gavaskar's highest Test score (236). He also failed by 3 runs (176) to beat the Indian record, also held by Gavaskar (179), of maximum runs scored in a single day. Like Sachin Tendulkar, one year younger than he, Kambli was trained in the 'cricket nursery' at the Shivaji Park in Bombay. But Tendulkar earned his Test cap earlier than Kambli, who watched his friend's meteoric rise from the pavilion. When Tendulkar was playing for Yorkshire in the league matches in England, he invited Kambli to stay with him in his county house, when he learned a lot from the younger one. "He has emerged from the shadows of Sachin Tendulkar," said Gavaskar, when he watched Kambli score his first double century in Bombay.

Gavaskar now No.2

Australia's Allan Border, who was 69 short of Gavaskar's world record of 10,122 runs in Test cricket (see *Chandamama*, March 1993), crossed that mark in his 138th Test in Christchurch on February 26. He scored 88 in the first innings against New Zealand, to take his total to 10,161 runs.



**New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire**

THE ONE WHO IS QUALIFIED

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, you seem to be making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something I pity you. Instead of enjoying comfortable sleep on a cozy bed, you're still coming after me. You seem to be quite

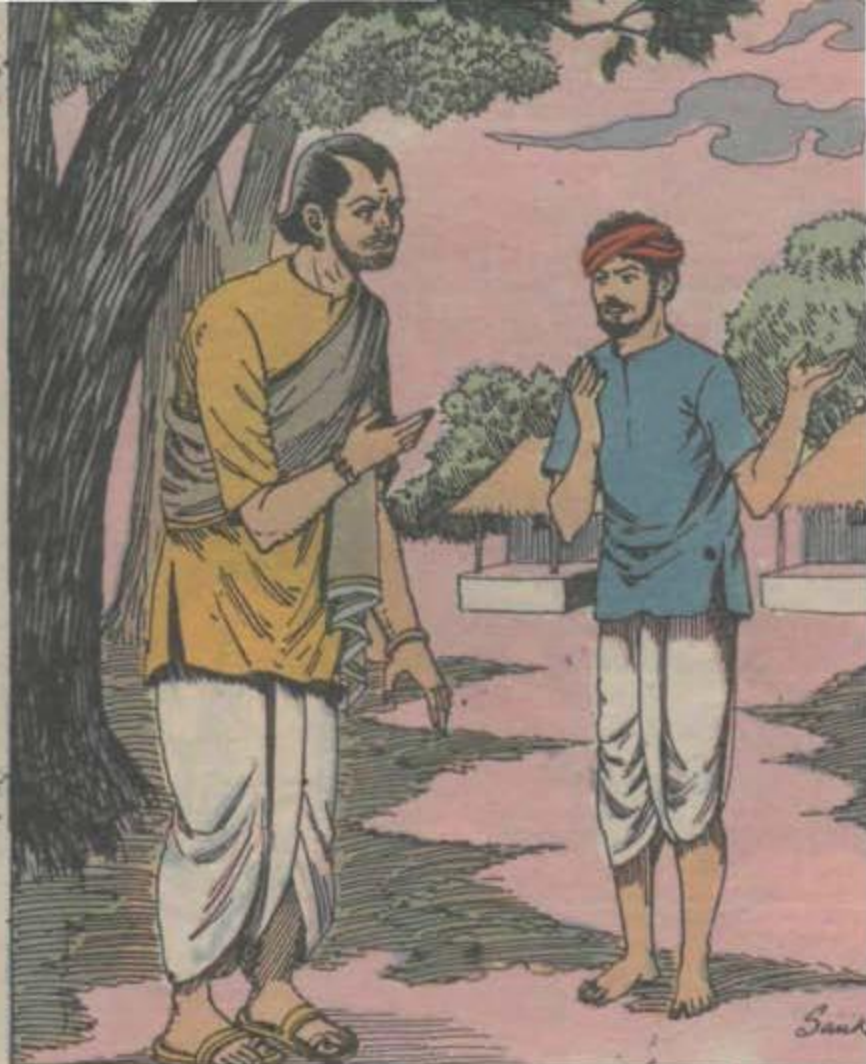


adamant. Perhaps someone has prompted you to do so. Your father, or your teacher? They themselves must have sometimes been harsh to people and you must have been provoked by their anger—like what happened in the case of Dharmapal. Let me tell you his story.” The vampire then began his narration.

The villagers of Bommayur were a restless lot. Every day they would find something to quarrel or to be agitated about. So much so, the people of the neighbouring villages and kingdoms hated them, because they had no respect for others or their views.

One day, a traveller reached Bommayur. Dharmapal had been walking all day long, so he was tired and his legs were paining. He decided to stay there for a night and take rest before proceeding on his journey the next day. He accosted a passerby and asked him where he could go and stay. “You may meet Ramayya or Rangayya. One of them will be able to put you up for the night. They stay on the adjacent street,” replied the man.

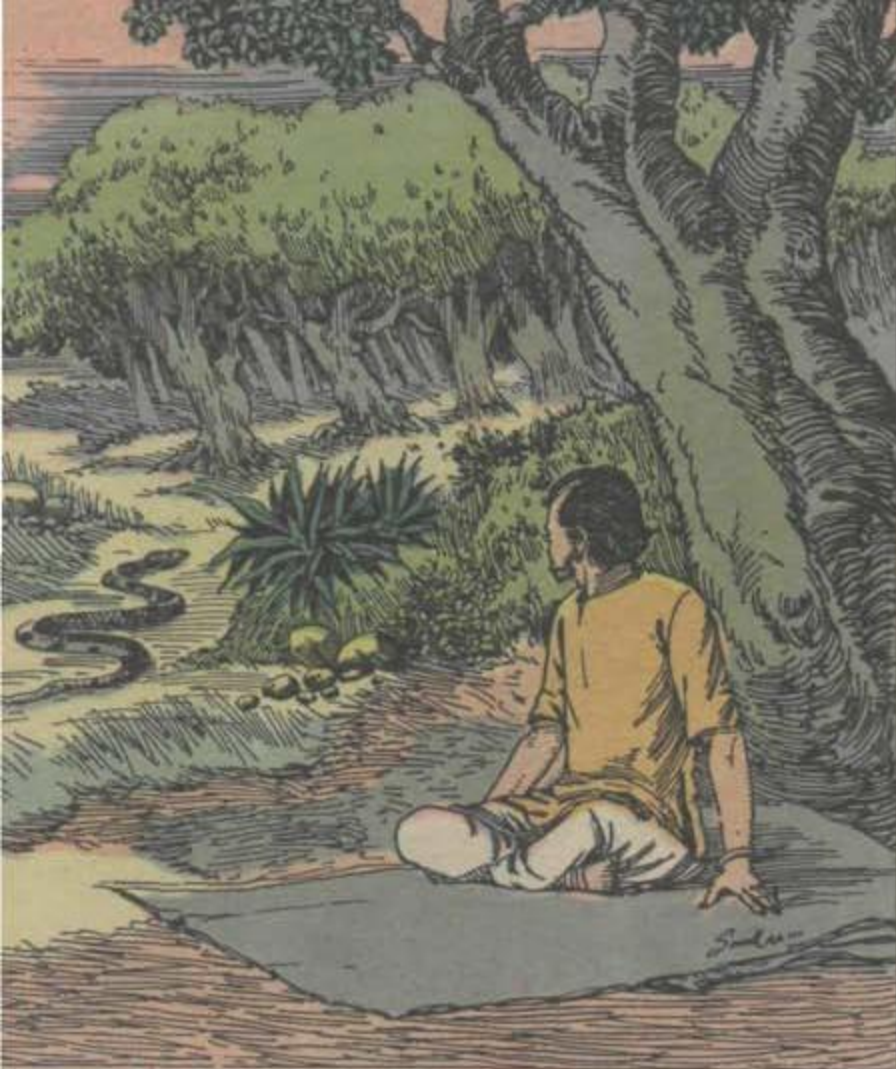
Dharmapal went to the next street and stood in front of a big



house. At the portico there was a man. Dharmapal asked him, “Is this the house of Rangayya?”

It was actually Ramayya’s house. As Ramayya and Rangayya were jealous of each other, he did not like someone going to him and enquiring about Rangayya. “This is Ramayya’s house. How dare you come here and mention the very name of Rangayya? Go away! I don’t want to see your face for a moment longer!” Ramayya thus rudely packed him off from his house.

Dharmapal then went in



overnight stay. At every place his plea was turned down as he had already been rejected by both Ramayya and Rangayya. He had no other go except to wander to the nearby forest, where he cleared a spot and lay down after spreading his shawl on the ground. Soon he saw two huge serpents come out of a hole. He was afraid they might harm him. But wonder of wonders, though they passed near him, they slid away. He felt grateful to them for allowing him to sleep there—something which the villagers themselves had denied him.

search of Rangayya's house. As word had already reached Rangayya about the incident in Ramayya's place, he was angry with Dharmapal for having gone to Ramayya first. When he saw Dharmapal in front of his house, he shouted at him. "Don't take another step forward. You didn't have any regard for me, and preferred to go to Ramayya's. I shall not have you even for a single moment, let alone a full night! You don't deserve my hospitality!"

Dharmapal went away and knocked at other doors for an

However, when he woke up the next morning, he found that a snake had coiled around him. He slowly got up without harming it and strangely, the snake uncoiled itself and slid away. As he stood up, he felt as though he was now stronger than ever, as if he had acquired some extra energy. He wondered whether the snake-pits had any energy giving properties! Dharmapal had some knowledge of medicines, and when he examined the holes and their surroundings, he came upon herbs and plants of medicinal value.

It was then that he heard a



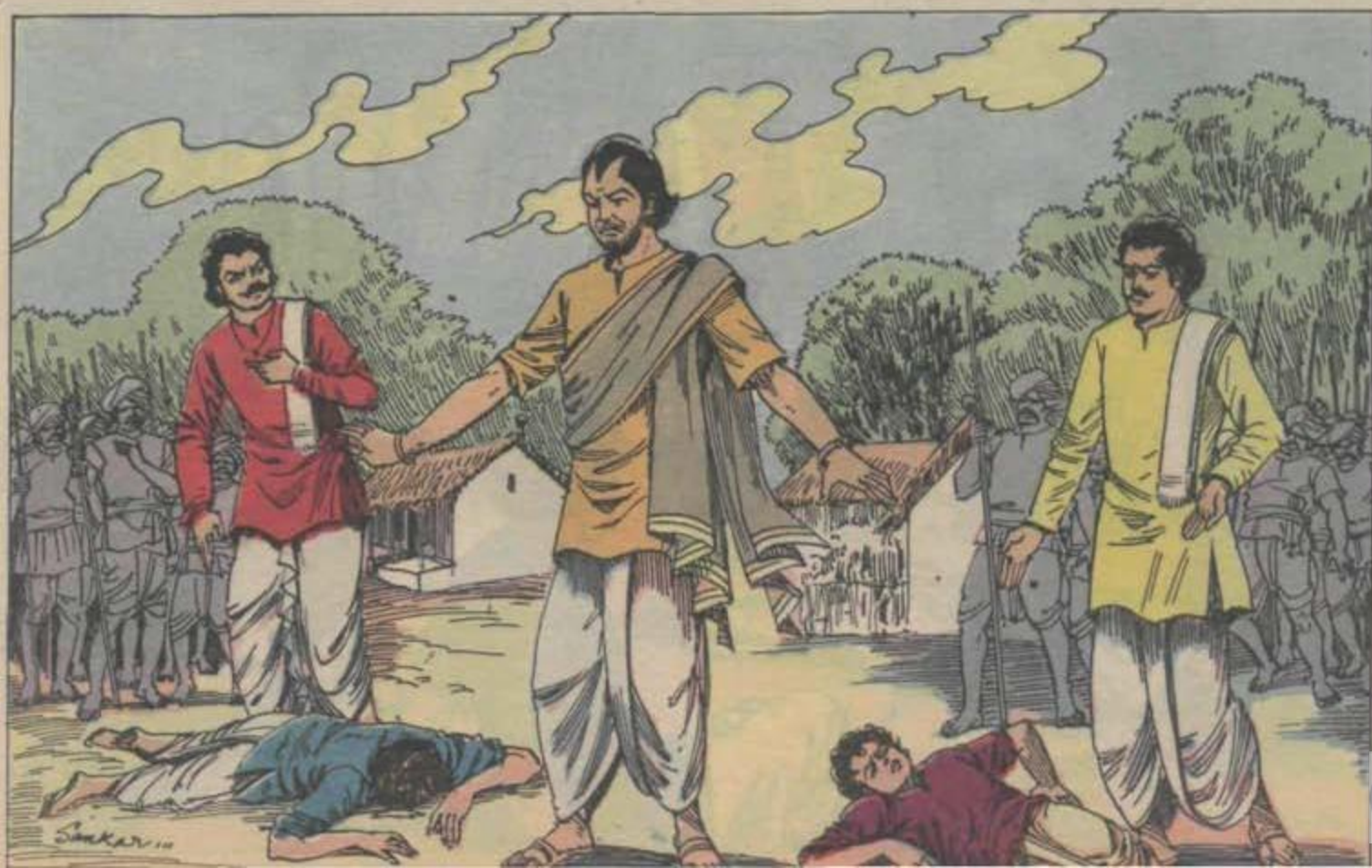
commotion a little away. He went to enquire and found that two groups were quarrelling, and two young boys were lying unconscious on the ground. They were the sons of Ramayya and Rangayya, he was told. They had had an exchange of words and had beaten each other. Soon the fathers reached there with their followers, and there was a clash between the two rival groups.

Dharmapal took a good look at the boys and found them breathing. "Will you stop your fight?" he shouted at the people. "I must have some peace and quietude to revive these boys here. Right now they are in a

serious condition!"

The people fell silent. "Aren't you the same person who came to me for a lodging for a night?" asked Ramayya mockingly. "And *you* say you can revive my boy?"

Before Rangayya could pose the same question to him, Dharmapal said, "You people, you're interested only in fighting with each other and don't care for the wealth you have right here in your midst. I have been wandering from place to place to secure medicines for my illness. That's how I reached this village. I approached several of you to give me facilities to stay here for just a



day. Having failed in my attempt, I was forced to come to the forest and rested near a snake-pit. Wonder of wonders, I was ill no longer, and even felt that I have acquired a new strength. I was curious and, to my surprise, I came upon a lot of medicinal plants and herbs. They are capable of even curing snake-bite. There may be life-saving medicines among them."

"If that be the case, go ahead and revive *my* boy," said Rangayya. "If you fail, then you may not go from here alive!" Ramayya also warned him against neglecting his own son because of the threat from

Rangayya.

Dharmapal made use of the herbs and plants available at the place and succeeded in reviving both boys. Their fathers were now very happy, and requested Dharmapal to stay in the village for some more days. "Ah! From where did you derive this sudden affection and regard for me?" he asked Ramayya and Rangayya with a sneer. "I shall stay here *not* for your sake, but for the sake of the people. Many of them have various kinds of ailments. I shall cure them of their maladies, and only then shall I go from here."

Apart from medicine, Dharmapal, though uneducated, was a

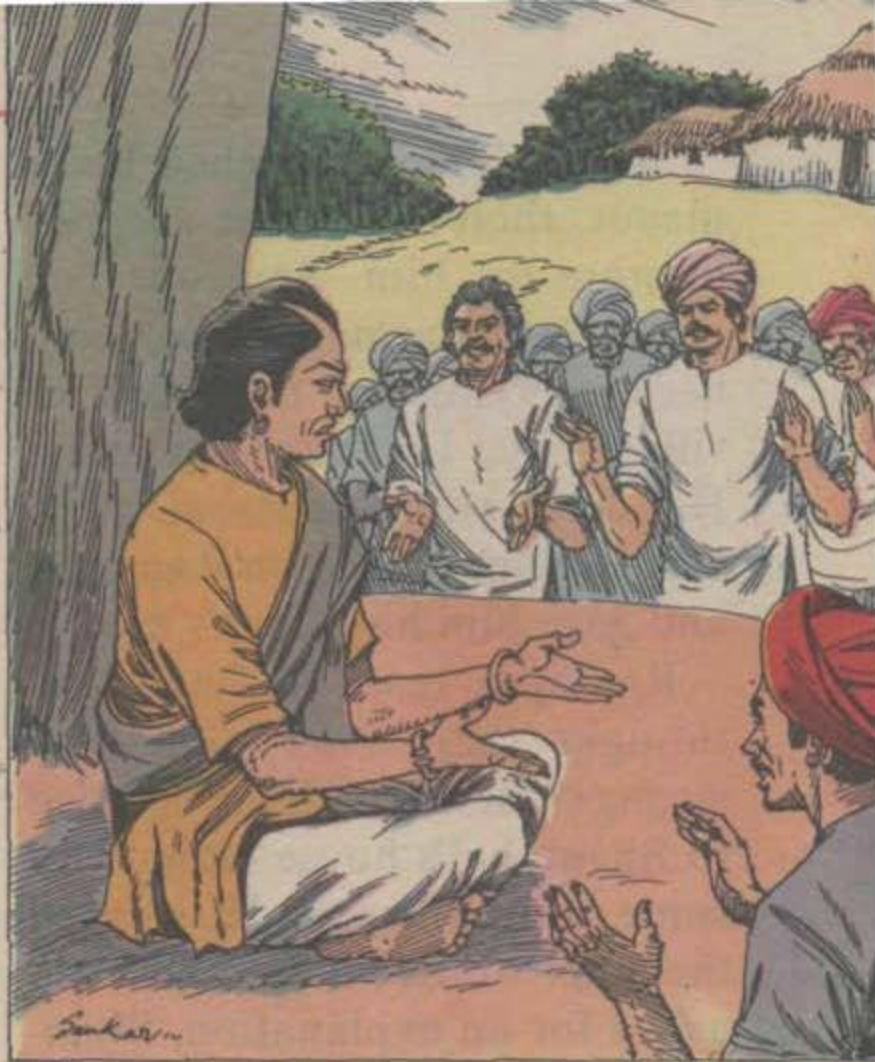


wise and knowledgeable person. So every evening and night, he called the villagers around him and gave them a lot of advice and prompted them to change their attitude to other people. They listened to him with rapt attention.

Days passed. The people of the neighbouring villages were surprised to find a change in the behaviour of the villagers of Bommayur. They now came to be respected; and they had a great regard for Dharmapal. So much so, when he announced his intention to leave Bommayur, they were reluctant to allow him to go away from their village. In fact, they even pleaded with him that he should become the village chief of Bommayur.

When they pressed him with their request, he told them, "I'm grateful to you for showering your affection on me. I've got to get back to my place to finish some work that I had left incomplete. But that should not worry you. I shall send my son over to you; you may make him the village chief. You must now permit me to leave Bommayur."

After bidding farewell to Bom-



mayur, Dharmapal proceeded to his own village. He narrated all that had taken place to his family and told his son, Gunapal, that he should get ready to go to Bommayur in his place, and that he would train him up to assume the duties of a village chief. Only at the end of five years was Dharmapal satisfied with his son's training. "You can now start for Bommayur," he told Gunapal. "Take this letter from me to the villagers, and carry out your duties diligently and honestly. I shall look you up after some days."

When Gunapal reached Bommayur, there was some surprise in store for him. Someone had posed as Dharmapal's son and been carrying on the work of village chief for four long years! His name was Shantabal. Anyway Gunapal called on Ramayya and gave him his father's letter.

Ramayya read the letter and thought there was something wrong somewhere. He proceeded to Shantabal's house along with some of the villagers. He showed the letter to the village chief and asked for an explanation. Shantabal, however, insisted that he was the son of Dharmapal. In fact, he told Ramayya he could check up with Dharmapal himself the veracity of his assertion.

Gunapal was stupefied. The villagers of Bommayur were no exception. "I think the only person who can solve the mystery is my father," said Gunapal. "The best thing is to send for him."

Ramayya sent word to Dharmapal, and he hurried to Bommayur. When he heard of the problem, he talked to Shantabal. "I was not after power or position when I became the village

chief here," explained Shantabal. "After you left Bommayur five years ago, people started quarrelling once again. A friend approached me and gave me all the news, especially that you had offered to send your son over here. At the instance of my friend, I decided to pose as your son, and found that the villagers had a high regard and respect for you. They took me for your son and made me village chief. Soon after I took over, the people stopped their fights and accepted all my advice and directions. I was thus able to establish peace here once again. Instead of meeting Ramayya, if only your son had met me first, I would have told him all that had happened. That did not take place, and when the situation worsened, I insisted that I was your son. You alone will be able to save me now!" Shantabal confessed and pleaded.

Dharmapal consoled him and took him to the villagers. "Yes, he's my son, my elder son. I had myself sent him over here," said Dharmapal. "Gunapal is my second son. I'm taking him back. Let Shantabal continue here as



village chief." He then bade farewell to everybody and left Bommayur with Gunapal.

The vampire ended the story there and asked King Vikramaditya, "O King! Don't you find Dharmapal's behaviour strange? He very much wished that his son became the village chief of Bommayur. That's why he took pains to train him up for five long years. Despite all this, why did he tell the people that Shantabal was his elder son, though he knew he was an imposter and his aim was to become the village chief? Was it correct on the part of Dharmapal?"

The king had, as usual, a ready answer. "True, Dharmapal had taken the trouble of teaching and training his son, Gunapal. But he found that Shantabal, without

any such training, had well looked after the village, and succeeded in bringing peace to Bommayur. In administration, no one should differentiate between son or a nephew or anyone else. Whoever is effective in administration deserves and is qualified to hold the post of village chief. Shantabal had uttered a lie, no doubt, but it had its effect in bringing about unity among the people. When Dharmapal realised the success achieved by Shantabal, he had no hesitation in accepting the youngster as his son."

The vampire knew that the king had again outwitted him. He flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him. And Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.



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PICKS FROM THE WISE

If you keep your mind sufficiently open, people will throw a lot of rubbish into it.

—William A. Orton

God is our refuge and strength, a very pleasant help in trouble.

—Mahatma Gandhi

The loud laugh, that speaks the vacant mind.

—Goldsmith



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